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WAR AGAINST NAXALISM

'New Chhattisgarh govt. aiding the fight'

NEWS » PAGE 10

MAHARASHTRA CABINET

Bhujbal out, Shelar in: 39 Ministers take oath

NEWS » PAGE 11

M.S. SUBBULAKSHMI AWARD

T.M. Krishna honoured at Music Academy

NEWS » PAGE 12

DATA POINT

Indians make up over 78% of top paid H1B seekers

Sponsors came from relatively smaller firms

OPINION » PAGE 9

SUPER SUNDAY

Head and Smith help Australia take charge

SPORT » PAGE 15

Assembly set for more sound and fury

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

While Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced that three days from Monday at the Belagavi session of the Karnataka legislature would be dedicated to discussions on North Karnataka issues, there is every indication of the session turning more stormy as the Winter Session enters the second and final week.

On Sunday, BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra dismissed as "illogical" the allegation that he had attempted to bribe former Karnataka Minority Commission chairperson Anwar Manippady to hush up a report on waqf encroachments when the BJP was in power, and his father B.S. Yediyurappa was the Chief Minister.

DETAILS ON » PAGE 4

Simultaneous polls Bill not to come up before LS today

Two Bills on the matter removed from the revised list; government likely to complete financial business first; the Rajya Sabha will begin the day with a discussion on supplementary grants

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government has not included the Constitution amendment Bill on holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and Assemblies on the revised list of business for Monday, indicating that the Bill could be delayed.

The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill were earlier listed for Monday in the Lok Sabha.

Indications are that the Centre will bring the Bills once the Rajya Sabha completes the discussion on the Constitution and after the passage of supplementary demands for grants in the Lok Sabha.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has invited Mallikarjun Kharge for discussions on Monday to end the impasse. ANI

Now, if the Centre wants to bring the Bills on Monday, permission from Speaker Om Birla is necessary to introduce a supplementary list of business. The members received both Bills after the Union Cabinet cleared them last week.

In the statement on objects and reasons, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal has said the general elections to the House of the People and all State Assemblies were held simultaneously in 1951-52, 1957, 1962 and 1967. However, due to premature dissolution of some Assemblies in 1968 and 1969, the cycle of holding polls simultaneously with the House of the People was disrupted.

He said the Law Commission, in its 170th report, suggested that holding separate elections for Assemblies should be an exception rather than the rule.

"There is an imperative need for holding of simultaneous elections, given that elections have become expensive and time-consuming," he said, adding that a committee under the chairmanship of former President Ram Nath Kovind too recommended the same.

In the Rajya Sabha, the first item on the agenda is discussion and voting on Supplementary Demands for Grants – First Batch for 2024-2025.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Kejriwal for New Delhi as AAP names all candidates

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday released its fourth and final list of 38 candidates for the Delhi Assembly election. Party chief Arvind Kejriwal will contest from the New Delhi constituency, while Chief Minister Atishi has been repeated from Kalkaji.

A keen contest is on the cards in New Delhi, where the Congress has fielded former MP Sandeep Dikshit, son of the late Sheila Dikshit, former Delhi Chief Minister. BJP leader Parvesh Verma, son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, has announced that he is eyeing the seat too. The AAP has now announced candidates for all 70 seats. In 2020, it had won 62 of the 70 seats it contested.

There was no change in the constituencies of several senior leaders of the party. Gopal Rai will be contesting from Babarpur again, Saurabh Bhardwaj from Greater Kailash, Raghuvinder Shokeen from Nangloi, Mukesh Kumar Ahlawat from Sultanpur Majra, Amanatullah Khan from Okhla, and former Health Minister Satyendar Jain from Shakur Basti.

In AAP's second list, former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was fielded from Jangpura instead of Patparganj, leading to speculation that other senior leaders may also move to different constituencies.

The final list also includes the name of Posh Balyan, who will fight the polls from Uttam Nagar. Ms. Balyan is the wife of MLA Naresh Balyan, who is currently in judicial custody in a case lodged under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

NEARBY

'Bagair hukum' farmers lose hope of getting land

SHIVAMOGGA
Bagair hukum farmers cultivating small plots of land are losing hope of owning the land, due to the reasons for which their applications are being rejected. » Page 4

Foodies face 'service charge' dilemma

BENGALURU
While the CCPA issued norms that consumers can't be forced to pay service charge, it remains a bone of contention among restaurateurs and consumers. » Page 2

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 7

River sutra

Mela rituals: Ahead of the Maha Kumbh Mela, sadhus take out a Juna Akhara procession on a pontoon bridge laid across the Ganga for the festival in Prayagraj on Sunday. AFP

Online resource of detailed 3D images of human brain released

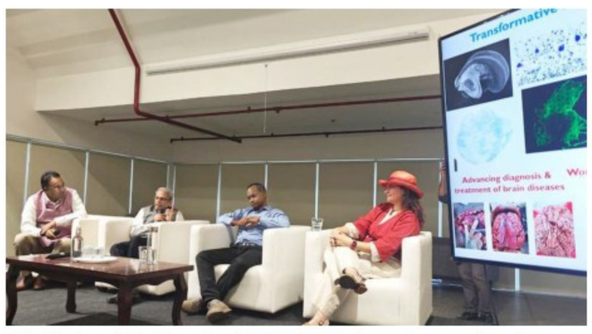
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a first, the Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre of IIT Madras has released DHARANI, an online-resource of detailed 3D cell-resolution images of the human brain in its second trimester.

With this, IIT Madras has become the first research organisation in the world to release the most detailed 3D high-resolution images of the fetal brain. As many as 5,132 brain sections were digitally imaged at cell-resolution using cutting-edge brain mapping technology developed by the Centre.

This is the first time such advanced human brain data has been produced from India and made available as a globally accessible resource. The results will be released through a publication as a special issue by the *Journal of Comparative Neurology*, a systems neuroscience journal.

The announcement was made on Sunday at the Science Gallery in Bengaluru by the team members of Sudha Gopalakrishnan Center at IIT-Madras. The team said the project cost less than one-tenth of what it would have cost in Western countries.



Dignitaries at the launch of DHARANI in Bengaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The research was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team at IIT Madras with researchers from India, Australia, the US, Romania and South Africa and medical collaborators with Chennai-based Mediscan Systems and Saveetha Medical College Hospital. This research is led by Prof. Mohanasankar Sivaprakasam, head Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre.

IIT Madras said that this research is critical for India as the country accounts for nearly one-fifth of the world's childbirths at 25 million each year.

"This makes it vital for the country to understand brain development from the fetus to a child to adolescence and to a young adult and developmental disorders like learning disabilities and autism," IIT Madras said.

Kalaburagi Rotti: A local cuisine packs up to go places

A women's cooperative brand from the arid district that sold jowar and bajra 'rottis' online so far, is now set to open its first offline store in Kalaburagi. More are set to be launched in franchisee model and cooperative wants to expand base abroad

Kumar Buradikatti
KALABURAGI

The Kalaburagi district administration's initiative to economically empower women by leveraging their traditional cooking skills and locally available resources is gaining momentum.

Its efforts to capitalise on the popularity of jowar and bajra 'rottis', a staple in north Karnataka, by bringing women 'rotti' producers onto a common cooperative platform and selling them under the Kalaburagi Rotti brand, are evoking a good response.

The Kalaburagi Rotti brand has been getting a good response. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Launched by Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge here on March 13, Kalaburagi Rotti is now set to open its first outlet for offline sale in Kalaburagi. More are set to be launched in franchisee model in the days to come.

The products were hitherto being sold online.

"The primary mode of rotti sale is online, both on its website (https://kalaburagirotti.com/) and other online marketplaces. As part of our plans to offline stores, especially in Kalaburagi, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad in a franchise model, the first outlet is going to be opened near Appa Lake in Kalaburagi shortly," Samad Patel, Joint Director of Agriculture, who is associated with the initiative, told *The Hindu*.

"Kalaburagi district has 90% rain-fed area under cultivation where jowar and bajra, apart from pulses such as red gram, black gram, and green gram, are abundantly grown," said Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Fouzia Taranum, explaining the idea behind the initiative.

The Kalaburagi Rotti Producers Sahakara Sangha, a cooperative society, was formed and registered. Rotti makers, especially women, who were already provided with subsidised rotti-making machines under government schemes, were brought together to produce rottis for the cooperative.

The systems of box packing, barcode, transportation, and other logistics were put in place.

The cooperative includes around 100 women and self-help groups, with 500 people directly employed.

Techie's death: Wife and family arrested, brought to Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Marathahalli police, investigating the death of 34-year-old techie Atul Subhash, on Saturday arrested his wife, her mother and brother for allegedly abetting his death.

Subhash was found dead at his residence in Munekollala in Bengaluru on December 9.

Nikita Singhania, wife of Atul, her mother Nisha Singhania and brother Anurag Singhania, were the persons who were arrested. A fourth suspect, Sushil Singhania, Nikita's uncle, is yet to be arrested and efforts are on to secure him, the police said.

Several teams had been dispatched to track down the persons, who were on the run.

While one team found Nikita at a paying guest accommodation in Gurugram, Haryana, her mother and brother were nabbed by another team of police in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, DCP, Whitefield division, Shivakumar Gunare said.

"The accused have been brought to Bengaluru and sent to judicial custody after being produced before a local court," said a police officer. The accused have been booked under section 108 (abetment to suicide) of BNS. Efforts are on to track down Nikita's uncle who is on the run, added the police.

Meanwhile, Pawan Kumar Modi, the father of the deceased, has demanded the authorities concerned to reunite them with their grandson. The child, according to the police, is in the custody of their relatives.

Speaking to the media from his hometown in Uttar Pradesh, he thanked the police for their efforts and demanded strict punishment for the accused.

(Those in distress or having suicidal thoughts, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help).

Root 2.0 — a perfect symmetry between unorthodoxy and consistency

England's prolific run-scorer has benefited ever since Stokes and McCullum took over and has shown his willingness to adapt without compromising on his hunger for hundreds even as his illustrious compatriots are struggling for runs due to various factors; if the former captain can succeed in the marquee battles, he might even surpass Tendulkar

AFP

Vivek Krishnan

Of all the ways that Joe Root could have sauntered to his 36th Test hundred, against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington last week, you would think that a reverse ramp over the wicketkeeper off a tall fast bowler was fraught with the maximum risk. As the ball sailed over Tom Blundell behind the stumps and trickled into the boundary rope, Root took off his helmet, kissed the Three Lions badge embossed on it, raised his bat and had a hearty laugh with Ben Stokes at the other end.

The manner of getting to the century and the visuals thereafter were revealing of a batter who seems to be at complete ease and enjoying his game more than ever before. So much so that even an impending milestone doesn't deter him from playing a shot that triggered widespread criticism when his execution went awry against Jasprit Bumrah in Rajkot earlier this year.

Perhaps why should it when scoring hundreds has become run-of-the-mill for Root in his current avatar? Since 2021, he has as many as 19 of them; for context, it is just four less than what Kevin Pietersen – an England stalwart – managed in his entire career. In the nine preceding years of Root's Test career, he had 17. For further evidence that Root's career graph has had a significant upturn of the kind that's rare for a batter in his early to mid-30s, consider some more numbers. In 54 Tests from 2021 onwards (before the ongoing third Test against New Zealand), he has compiled 5063 runs at 56.25. In 97 Tests before that, his 7823 runs came at an average of 47.99.

Root has become even more dominant, in fact, since May 2022. With Stokes having taken over as skipper and Brendon McCullum as coach at that juncture, it isn't hard to infer that freeing Root from the responsibility of captaincy has played a major role in this rejuvenation. Although he did rack up a few daddy hundreds as captain from 2017 to 2022, the challenges of leadership particularly when results were not favourable (England had won one out of 17 Tests before Stokes took charge) seemed to wear Root down and not allow him to optimise his ability as a batter by the end.

As skipper, his overall returns were 5295 runs in 64 Tests at an average of 46.44, which is good but still below his career average of 50.93. From the summer of 2022, when 'Bazball' entered the cricketing lexicon, he has 2997 runs in 34 matches at 57.63 including 11 hundreds.

Yes, Root was always a precocious talent destined for greatness from the moment he walked out to bat with a boyish grin against India in Nagpur in December 2012. Soon after his debut, he became part of the 'Fab Four' alongside Virat Kohli, Steve Smith and Kane Williamson, an acknowledgement of the excellence they were simultaneously exhibiting.

In the last couple of years, however, what the 33-year-old has done is find another gear that threatens to leave his famed contemporaries behind. With Kohli and Smith (whose hundred against India in the third Test came after 24 innings) being increasingly prone to patchy form and Williamson having his issues with injuries, the divergence in their returns has been further amplified.

What the other three are encountering is perhaps only to be expected with advancing age slowing down reflexes and prolonging the recovery time after an injury. That Root, who will turn 34 on December 30, hasn't faced such hindrances yet may be a sign that he is on course to scaling higher peaks.

Breaking records

As far as English batters are concerned, Root is already top of the pile. When he amassed 262 against Pakistan in Multan in October, he moved past Alastair Cook to become England's leading run-scorer in Test history. Root is currently fifth in the list of highest run-getters ever, but with just 492 runs separating the Yorkshireman from Ricky Ponting at second, there isn't any doubt that he will take the Australian's spot in the near future.

It has understandably led to the big question: can Root, who has 12,886 runs after 151 Tests, go past Sachin Tendulkar's colossal mark of 15,921 runs in 200 Tests?

For the query to even be raised is a credit to Root's quality as well as a reflection of the volume of Tests that England plays. Cook seems to be backing his former teammate.

"I can see him overhauling Sachin Tendulkar's record," the former England opener told *the BBC* in October. "When I retired, I thought there was every chance that my record would be broken. I thought only the effects of captaincy and the hunger that takes out of you would stop him. I think the fact that Stokes has taken over the captaincy has helped Root.

"You could say Sachin is still the favourite, but (only) just. He's been so lucky with injuries. All great players who played for a long time have been lucky with injuries. You just never know what's around the corner, but it has to be something like it that could stop him. But I don't see that happening for Root to lose that hunger and ability to keep driving himself forward for the next couple of years."

Considering Root's understated reaction to surpassing Cook's tally, it is safe to say he is far from satisfied. "I'm obviously proud, but still feel as though there's plenty more left to do and many more runs to get. I'm sure I'll look back on it at some point when I'm finished and be very proud of it," he had told the media.

If Root is managing to be so productive at a time when the returns of particularly Kohli and Smith seem to be dwindling, though they are a year or two older, it is perhaps because the Englishman has fewer chinks or quirks in his batting technique. As opposed to Smith's exaggerated back-and-across shuffle and Kohli's perpetual problems outside the off-stump, Root has a more textbook foundation that's continuing to hold him in good stead.

Like Smith, Root did tend to be a candidate for leg-before dismissals against pace when he would go across a bit too far and fall over. But Kevin Sharp, one of his formative coaches at Yorkshire, had noted in a chat in 2021 that Root had fixed that issue.

"His back foot was transferring a bit further than he wanted and his front foot came across as well. That could have affected his balance. He is now definitely more balanced at the crease," Sharp had observed then. "This has been something that has always been very important to him. Through the years, he has tried different movements. He needs a pre-delivery movement because that works for him."

Modest returns Down Under

For all of Root's accolades, though, the one glaring anomaly in his illustrious career is his record in Australia. In 14 Tests and 27 innings Down Under, he has only accrued 892 runs at an average of 35.68. More alarmingly, he doesn't have a single three-figure score in the country, with his nine half-centuries underlining a previously existing failure to convert his starts into hundreds.

Team success has also eluded Root in these contests. Since his first tour of Australia for the 2013/14 Ashes, England hasn't won a single Test there.

This is what former Australia batter and coach Darren Lehmann was alluding to when he recently stopped short of calling Root an all-time great. "That's the only thing stopping Joe Root," Lehmann said on *ABC Radio* during the first Test between Australia and India in Perth. "He's a great player, but is he an all-time great? I don't have him in that realm."

With runs in Australia long considered to be the benchmark for opposition batters to gauge their standing, Root's numbers on those hard and bouncy pitches do stick out like a sore thumb. Particularly on the 2021/22 tour, when Root had begun to get back to his very best after three ordinary years, he had an opportunity to make amends. But across five Tests, his 322 runs without a single ton meant he wasn't able to redeem himself.

With the next Ashes series in Australia just 12 months away, Root will be certainly chomping at the bit to prove a point. Before that, he would also be challenged by an Indian attack spearheaded by Jasprit Bumrah over five Tests in England's home summer. If he can sustain his incredibly high standards during the course of these marquee battles, he will get ever closer to the Indian legend stationed at Mount Everest.

THE GIST

- Root was always a precocious talent destined for greatness from the moment he walked out to bat with a boyish grin against India in Nagpur in December 2012
- If he is managing to be so productive at a time when the returns of particularly Kohli and Smith seem to be dwindling, though they are a year or two older, it is perhaps because the Englishman has fewer chinks or quirks in his batting technique
- With the next Ashes series in Australia just 12 months away, Root will be certainly chomping at the bit to prove a point

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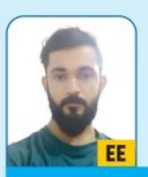
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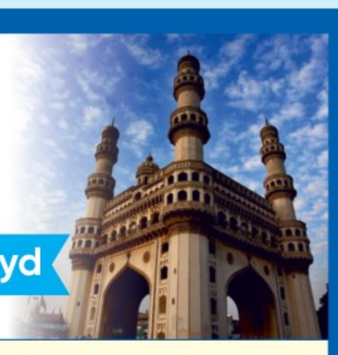

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Foodies face 'service charge' dilemma

While some restaurants don't levy the charge, a few others do, but when customers refuse to pay, they remove it

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

I had recently gone to a popular restobar in J.P. Nagar. While handing over the menu, the waiter also said that service charge was mandatory. When I questioned why they made it mandatory despite there being regulations against it, he replied that it was up to the management, and I ended up paying 10% service charge, which was around ₹150," said Divya Rao, a marketing executive from Jayanagar.

While the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued clear guidelines in 2022 that consumers cannot be forced to pay service charge, it remains a bone of contention among restaurateurs and consumers in Bengaluru.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority issued clear guidelines in 2022 that consumers cannot be forced to pay service charge. FILE PHOTO

Making it mandatory

While some restaurants don't levy them, others had the charge, but was removed when customers refused to pay. But of late, some high-end fine dining spots and restobars mention in the menu that service charge is mandatory. While the food items themselves are expensive in such restaurants, the service charge, along with Goods and Service Tax, further burns a hole in the pockets of customers.

"At high-end restaurants, most of us do not like to cancel our plans at the last minute as we would have already made reservations and travelled, and we end up paying the service charge reluctantly. I would rather tip my waiter directly than being forced to pay the service charge," said Preetham M., a software engineer.

On the other hand, Chetan Hegde, who heads the Bengaluru chapter of National Restaurant Association of India, said most "mid- and high-range" restaurants have a mandatory service charge.

"It is made clear to the customers when they choose to go to certain restaurants that they have to pay a certain service charge, we display it at the entry itself. It is also explained that the service charge goes to the staff," he explained.

However, consumer activists clarified that it is against the CPPA guidelines to force service charge upon consumers under any circumstance.

Consumer activists clarified that it is against the CPPA guidelines to force service charge

"It is regarded as an unfair trade practice. The consumer can first lodge a complaint with the hotel or restaurant, and get it cancelled. If that does not work, then they can file a complaint with consumer forums, and even go to the Karnataka State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. All they need is the name of the restaurant and the bill for the charge they have paid," said Y. G. Muralidharan, founder-trustee of the Consumer Rights Education and Awareness Trust.

"The major problem is that consumers are not aware that service charge is purely voluntary. If they see at a restaurant that it is mandatory, they simply believe it and pay it. That should not be the case."

Scamsters target P2P crypto traders to launder stolen money

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Cybercriminals are now targeting cryptocurrency traders engaged in peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions on trading platforms, exploiting the system to launder stolen money in exchange for the currencies.

The alleged fraudsters approach traders with offers to buy cryptocurrency, transferring stolen money into their accounts. The funds are often linked to victims of various online fraud schemes, including loan application scams, OTP fraud, and courier fraud.

Mohammad Ismail, a Bengaluru-based cryptocurrency trader, recounted his ordeal to *The Hindu*. He received a call from Gujarat police a few months ago, informing him that his company's bank account was flagged in a cybercrime investigation. Shocked, Ismail travelled to Gujarat to respond to the summons.

"The Gujarat police suspected me of being part of a gang of online scamsters, as stolen money from a complainant was traced to my company's account," Ismail explained. "However, I clarified that I am a legitimate trader who pays taxes on transactions."

The money that is offered to traders is often linked to victims of online fraud scheme. FILE PHOTO

Ismail revealed that the incident stemmed from a transaction two months prior when an individual posing as a trader contacted his company for a P2P deal. The person purchased 4,000 Tether coins, worth ₹84.84 per coin, and transferred the payment to his account.

"We only realised the money was stolen when the police informed us. Upon discussing with other traders, we found this was a widespread issue," Ismail said. He added that fraudsters prefer converting stolen money into cryptocurrency as it can be encashed in crypto-friendly countries like Dubai, where regulations are more lenient.

Another trader shared a similar experience, emphasising how this tactic has become prevalent over the last year. "For scamsters, moving stolen money through multiple accounts is risky as transactions can be traced. Converting it to crypto provides a safer route," he explained.

A senior police officer handling cybercrimes confirmed this emerging trend, noting that P2P transactions are inherently vulnerable. "Traders must conduct thorough background checks of buyers to avoid falling victim to such scams," the officer advised.

As governments change, history gets edited, cut, and re-reviewed: Dalrymple

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

One of the interesting things about history is that in every country, the government sets the curriculum," says historian and writer William Dalrymple at the 13th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival, held in the city on Sunday.

Move to right

Mr. Dalrymple, who was in conversation with award-winning radio and television journalist and writer Anita Anand and publishing professional Arcopol Chaudhuri at a session titled *Empire: The Podcast*, says to a packed crowd, "As governments change, history gets edited, cut, and re-reviewed."

And this is not just in India, says Dalrymple, who also co-hosts the hugely popular *Empire*, a podcast that examines the personalities, stories and events of various empires, with Ms. Anand. Even in Britain, a place which is not normally known for political upheavals, there's been a definite move on the right wing to counter writers like himself who have raised the whole issue of colonialism, says Mr. Dalrymple, who believes that people listen to podcasts like *Empire* around the world, "because we don't follow a national agenda."

BANGALORE LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Historian William Dalrymple at the 13th Bangalore Literature Festival. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

The podcast numbers corroborate this. Mr. Chaudhuri throws up some interesting facts about the podcast produced by Goalhanger, one of the U.K.'s largest independent podcast groups. "Empire has about 2.5 million downloads per month...which is insane," he says, adding that 66% of the listenership comes from outside of the U.K., very different from other Goalhanger podcasts, which are mostly U.K. based.

The conversation then veers into various topics the podcast has covered, including the Cuban Revolution, the Korean War, Chinese history, the American and Persian Empires, and so much more.

The panellists also discussed the future of the podcast with Mr. Chaudhuri asking, "Do you see this going into corporate empires?" Ms. Anand says they hope to get to eventually, looking at "the corporatisation of the world," while Mr. Dalrymple interjects, "Mark Zuckerberg is the Clive of our times and Elon Musk, the General Dyer."

Children at the BLF in Bengaluru. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

AG-BLF book prizes announced

The10th Atta Galatta-Bangalore Literature Festival book prizes were announced at BLF on Sunday. The organisers said they had over 200 books nominated for the fiction prize, close to 250 titles for the non-fiction prize, around 50 titles each for the cover design and popular choice prizes. They had over 100 children's books nominated for best fiction and best non-fiction for children and around 60 titles for best picture book story and illustrations.

THE WINNERS

Children's category

- **Menaka Raman** – *How to win an election*
- **Devika Cariapa** – *A Children's history of India in 100 objects*
- **Adithi Rao** – *Will Goondi come home?*
- **Sandhya Prabhat** – *Asha the auto driver*

Other category

- **Rithvik Singh** – *I don't love you anymore: Moving on and living your best life*
- **Upamanyu Bhattacharyya** – *Mad sisters of Esi (Cover design)*
- **Saharu Nusaiba Kannanari** – *The Chronicle of an hour and half*
- **Venki Ramakrishnan** – *Why we die: The new science of aging and longevity*

Realtor arrested for threatening official

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Anekal police have arrested a 45-year-old realtor, who posing as a relative of the UpaLokayukta, threatened the deputy tahsildar to get property registration work.

Based on the complaint by the deputy registrar, Lokayukta, the Anekal police tracked down the accused and arrested Anand Kumar, charging him under assault or use criminal force to deter public servants to discharge their duties, impersonation and cheating for further investigation.

The accused on December 10, called Kariya Naik, deputy Tahsildar and introduced himself as the relative of UpaLokayukta and also employee of Lokayukta office.

He gave instructions to Naik to register one acre of property belonging to one Babu in the name of another person.

He also gave deputy tahsildar instructions and details of the property to do the work on priority basis. The accused even made his associates to call Naik from different numbers posing as IGP and SP of Lokayukta to pressurise him to get the work done.

Suspecting something fishy, Mr. Naik approached Lokayukta for clarification and found that there is no one in the name of Anand Kumar working there nor any instructions given to him.

Man held for trying to molest dog

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a bizarre case, villagers of Channapatna rural caught a 55-year-old labourer allegedly trying to molest a stray dog on the roadside in an inebriated state on Saturday. The accused Basavaraju was handed over to the police, who have registered a case charging him under section 296 (obscene act) and 62 (punishment for attempt to commit suicide) under BNS. According to the police, Basavaraju is a migrant labourer from Ballari. The accused also filed a counter-complaint accusing the group of people of assaulting him mistaking him to be molesting the dog.

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THE HINDU

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public are hereby informed that, our client **MRS.JAMUNA KANDARI, W/o. Mr.N.H.Kandari,** residing at: No.1835/10, 2nd A Cross, NGEF Layout, Nagarbhavi, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore560 072, has lost the original Sale deed dated:18-06-2015, registered as Document No.TVR-1-00795-2015-16 in respect of immovable residential property bearing **Site No.291**, situated at **'SANKESHWAR SUNSHINE CITY', Peddanapalya Village, Tavarekere Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk**, while taking Xerox copy of the same near Nagarbhavi Circle. Our client had lodged an online police complaint **on 15-12-2024, lost report No. 1383312/2024.** If anybody found the said document please contact this Nos. **9844155041 and 9945886627.**

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'When you are presenting a meal, you are telling a story'

Priyamedha Dutta
BENGALURU

"Cooking with pleasure is about imagining food ..." says Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee. If one cannot imagine the excitement of eating it, cooking is hard, said the author, who was in conversation with writer Ruth Dsouza Prabhu about his first cookbook *Cooking to Save Your Life* and his new book *Chhaunk* at the 13th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival held on Sunday.

Joining them was Cheyenne Olivier, the illustrator for both the books.

No glossy pics

While most cookbooks come with glossy photographs of carefully curated dishes, Ms. Cheyenne spoke on why they decided to break away from that by using illustrations. "With photographs, they don't leave much scope for interpretation... You know exactly how it's supposed to look, but most times, we don't have the same ingredients or the same skills, so you get rather disappointed when it comes out looking something different."

"The illustrations in these books are little about food and more about people cooking together and eating together. It is also about the place where they eat, which can be outside the kitchen or outside of the dining table."

Storytelling

For Mr. Banerjee, most of his dishes come with a bit of storytelling. "Presenting a meal is about telling a story. One of the things we tried to do was weave the recipes into stories that are taken from my life. All the essays came with a little bit of memorializing and discussion of social issues."

Abhijit Banerjee at the BLF. SUDHAKARA JAIN

On being asked about the challenges of writing a cookbook as opposed to more academic writing, Mr. Banerjee elucidated how food could also be connected to social issues. "What's nice about food is that it is also connected with a plethora of social issues, whether it is caste, various types of conflicts or migration." While Mr. Banerjee is known for his work in economics, which involves working with elaborate numbers and data, Ms. Cheyenne spoke on how the process of writing these books was a general deviation from it. "I think the point is, it has to speak to someone like me who has no training in economics but also has an interest in economics."

Measure by the ear

Cooking to Save Your Life is all about practicality even if some of the methods sound outright hideous, for instance, cutting an onion by measuring it with the size of your earlobe. "I don't think it's stupid; I think it's practical. Nobody would know what a quarter of a teaspoon is. We don't need to pretend like it's some deep science in every step."

On being asked about globalisation and its impact on food where cuisines fall prey to misappropriation, Mr. Banerjee points out how he thinks it's difficult to claim ownership of any recipe owing to the various historical and social contexts from where they evolve.

Mr. Banerjee concludes by talking about his new book, *Chhaunk,* which discusses important questions of economics through cooking. "With this book, I wanted economics to be a social discourse that we should all be a part of."

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

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Office of the Chief Engineer (North), 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

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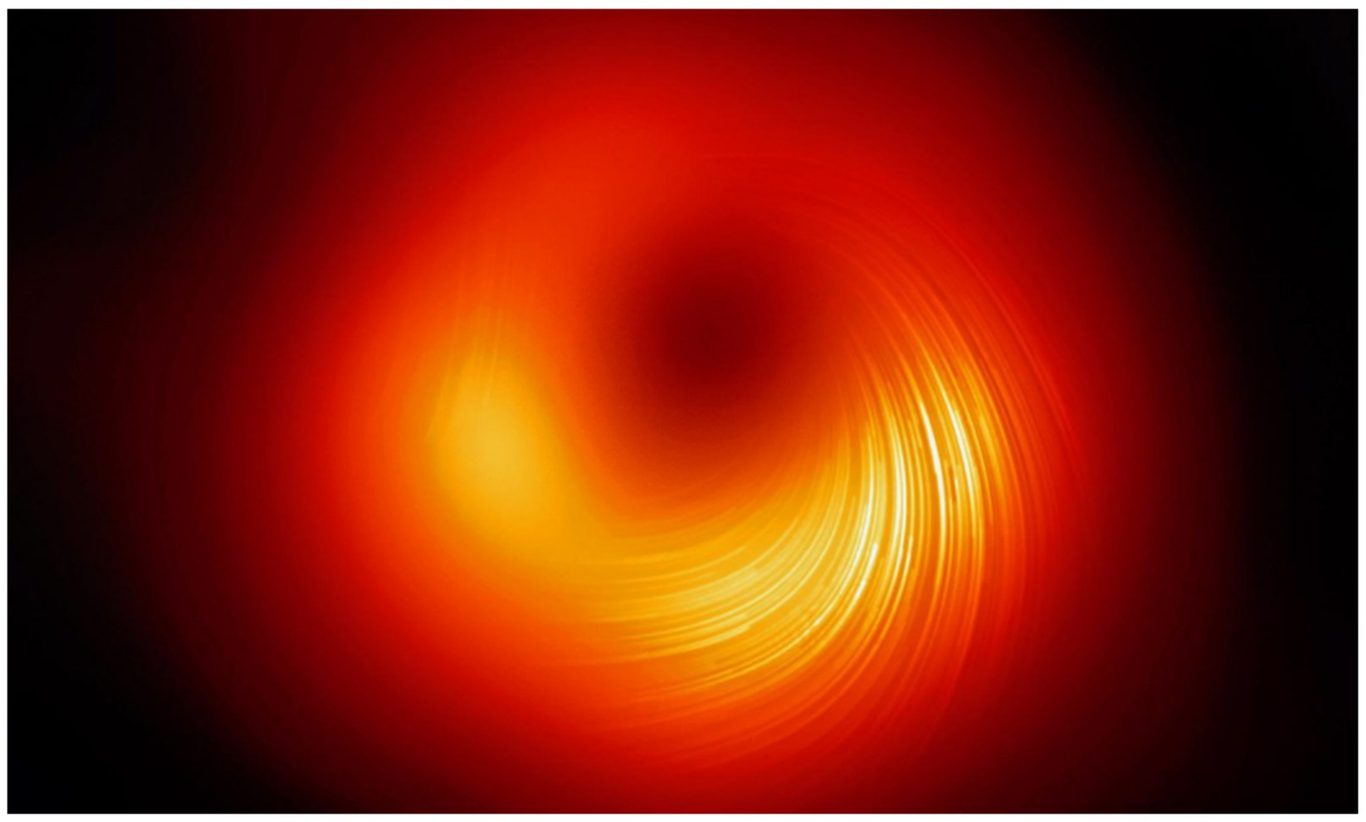
Can we make black holes reveal themselves in echoes of light?

When light passes around a black hole, its path bends. So some parts of the light take a direct route to the viewer while others pass around the black hole a few times before getting back on the original path. In this way, light emitted by a distant source in the cosmos may reach the earth at different instances, creating light echoes

Qudsia Gani



A view of the M87 supermassive black hole in polarised light as captured by the Event Horizon Telescope and released in 2021. EHT COLLABORATION (CC BY 4.0)

THE GIST

The effects black holes have on their surroundings are crucial to determining the structures of the galaxies they occupy and how the stars around them evolved over time

The mass and radius of a black hole impact the manner in which light behaves. The study claims that light echoes can be used as a new way to determine the masses and spins of black holes

Researchers collected images of light travelling around the M87 black hole. They estimated the time light took to travel from the near end to its far end, which depends on its mass and momentum. From this data, the team inferred echo delay

When it comes to making sense of our universe, the importance of black holes is hard to understate. Scientists know that a black hole exerts a strong gravitational pull, so much so that any object that gets closer to its centre beyond a point can never get back out. The effects of black holes on their surroundings include the release of a tremendous amount of energy. These effects are crucial to determining the structures of the galaxies they occupy and how the stars around them evolved over time.

A study published in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters* on November 7 is notable in this wider context. It was carried out by astrophysicists from the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and led by George Wong of the School of Natural Sciences at Princeton University. In their study, the researchers presented a new method to measure the properties of black holes by using the effects they have on light flowing around them.

Signatures in the light

When light passes around a very heavy object, like a black hole, its path bends. As a result some parts of the light may take a direct route to the viewer while others may pass around the black hole a few times before getting back on its original path. In this way, light emitted by a distant source in the cosmos may reach the earth at different instances, depending on its interactions with black holes on the way. When two beams of light emitted by the same source reach the earth at different points, the beam to arrive second will be an echo of the beam that arrived first. This phenomenon is thus called a light echo.

The manner and extent to which light circles around a black hole depends on the black hole's mass and radius. If the black hole is spinning (a.k.a., a Kerr black hole), it will also depend on the object's angular momentum. Thus, according to the study, scientists can use light echoes as a new and independent way to the masses and spins of black holes.

In general, the task of measuring a black hole's mass and spin is quite tedious because all the matter, hot gases, and the radiation swirling around the object complicate observations and make signals harder to extract from the noise. Light, fortunately, is affected differently and light echoes could offer a better signal-to-noise ratio.

An object that bends light is called a lens. Black holes do this by the sheer strength of their gravity; thus, the phenomenon is called gravitational lensing. Scientists theorised long ago that gravitational lensing could create light echoes, but they have not been directly measured so far. To get around this issue, the new study proposes the use of a technique called long-baseline interferometry. The principle here is that the non-simultaneous arrival of two signals – like two light beams – could interfere with each other to create a new, unique signal.

To spot light echoes created by a black hole, one telescope could be placed on the earth and the other in space. While the number of instruments may seem modest, they will have to operate with supreme technical rigour.

The main motivation for the new study was the fact that some of the supermassive black holes in the centre of the Milky Way and the nearby M87 galaxies have been found to have bright rings of light at a frequency of 230 GHz around them. The structure of these rings is influenced by astrophysical forces and the spacetime geometry of black holes, and scientists have been keen to study them in detail using very long baseline interferometry techniques. One particular aspiration is to trace the black hole's shadow on these rings to understand spacetime around the black holes.

Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity also anticipated the phenomenon of light echoes. In particular the theory predicts the echoes will be achromatic, meaning light of all frequencies should be able to form echoes

Independent of colour

The analysis in the new study essentially focused on a black hole at the centre of the M87 galaxy – an appealing object of study for light echoes since it's quite large in the sky. But the results are also applicable to other black holes. The baseline in 'long baseline interferometry' refers to the distance between the two telescopes that receive the light. According to the study, it should be at least 40 Gλ, where Gλ is a unit of measurement that refers to the telescopes' ability to collect signals at a specific frequency.

The Princeton team also carried out preliminary high-resolution simulations to test the credibility of their technique. For this, team members collected several thousand instantaneous images of light travelling around the M87 black hole, located nearly 55 million lightyears away, using the Event Horizon Telescope. Then they estimated the time beams of light took to travel from the near end of the black hole to its far end, which, according to their idea, would depend on the black hole's mass and angular momentum, after adjusting for the angle at which the telescope was viewing it. From this simulated data, the team inferred the echo delay.

Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity also anticipated the phenomenon of light echoes. In particular the theory predicts the echoes will be achromatic, meaning light of all frequencies should be able to form echoes. (Since Gλ is inversely proportional to the frequency, building a telescope to detect the echoes is a separate headache.) Thus any approach to detect light echoes at multiple frequencies at the same time could provide a good test of the new technique. A positive result will also be yet another confirmation that the general theory of relativity provides an accurate description of black holes.

(Qudsia Gani is an assistant professor in the Department of Physics, Government Degree College Pattan, Baramulla. qudsiagani6@gmail.com)

BIG SHOT

A camel caravan moves along the Erg Chebbi dunes in the Sahara outside Merzouga, Morocco, on December 5. An extratropical cyclone brought heavy rain to parts of the Sahara, including the Erg Chebbi, in early September. The runoff from the deluge created ephemeral lakes in the desert, including around the Erg Chebbi. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Mirror life: a deadly geometry

In a mirror, left and right become swapped. While you unscrew a bottle cap anti-clockwise in the real world, in the mirror you'll be rotating it clockwise.

Anything that has a handedness — left or right — is said to be chiral. Chiral molecules that are mirror images of each other are called enantiomers. A good example is the compound thalidomide. It was sold as a sedative for four years in the late 1950s before being withdrawn.

Scientists found that the right-handed enantiomer worked as a sedative, but the left-handed one caused severe birth defects.

In the human body itself, the amino acids used to make proteins are all left-handed whereas the DNA is right-handed (the double-helix twists to the right). The reasons are a mystery.

Scientists have been making and studying enantiomers in the lab for a long time, but recently a few of them have started on the road to creating ''microbes' — synthetic bacteria whose building blocks are enantiomers of their natural counterparts.

This illustration shows a DNA molecule twisting to the left. In our bodies, DNA twists to the right, and left-twisting DNA is absent. GETTY IMAGES

Earlier this month, an international group of scientists, including Deepa Agashe of the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, published a 300-page technical report and a commentary in the journal *Science* warning against efforts to build mirror life.

"Our analysis suggests that mirror bacteria would likely evade many immune mechanisms mediated by chiral molecules, potentially causing lethal infection in humans, animals, and plants," the commentary read.

- The Hindu Bureau

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
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with the subject 'Daily page'

KERC turns 25, consumers demand more regulations

The commission introduced an SOP for electric vehicle charging stations across the State

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

Explainer

- **What is KERC**
  Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission is an independent body set up by the Karnataka government under the Karnataka Electricity Reform Act 1999
- **Why was KERC set up**
  For the discharge of the functions conferred on it under the provisions of the Act
- **What are these functions**
  Determination of tariffs, regulation of electricity purchase and procurement process, facilitating intra-State transmission, issuing transmission and distribution licences, adjudicating disputes, etc.
- **Who works in the commission**
  A chairman (retired IAS officers), a secretary, director (tariff), director (technical), senior consultant (finance), consultant (tariff) and consultant (legal) along with other staff

It has been 25 years since the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC), an independent regulatory body focused primarily on protecting electricity consumers, was established under the Karnataka Electricity Reform Act of 1999. Karnataka, a pioneer in the electricity sector, was the second State in India after Odisha to set up an electricity regulatory commission.

In its report "25 Years of Dedicated Service to Karnataka State and Nation", the Commission highlighted its service to over 2.9 crore consumers. The KERC has played a pivotal role in determining tariffs, resolving disputes between electricity supply companies (escoms) and consumers, and issuing licences to distributors, among other responsibilities.

One of KERC's major achievements is reducing transmission and distribution (T&D) losses from 35.7% in FY 2000 to 14.05% in FY 2024. The timely issuance of tariff orders, promotion of renewable energy through preferential tariffs, and rationalization of tariff structures are also among its best practices. In recent years, KERC has eased administrative processes for enhancing sanctioned loads to install rooftop solar plants and passed draft regulations for rooftop aero turbines. It also introduced a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations across the state. Earlier this year, KERC earned praise from industries for advocating the removal of cross-subsidy charges on industrial and commercial consumers used to fund free power schemes.

One of KERC's major achievements is reducing transmission and distribution losses from 35.7% in FY 2000 to 14.05% in FY 2024

> Until 2010, the commission maintained strict accountability for escoms
> Former advisory member of KERC

KERC's Relevance

Despite its achievements, activists and consumer advocates have raised concerns about the relevance and effectiveness of KERC in recent years. According to a former advisory member of KERC, "Until 2010, the commission maintained strict accountability for escoms. In recent years, however, it has become escom-centric and less objective, neglecting its statutory responsibilities."

The 1999 Act mandates the presence of a senior officer to represent consumer interests within the commission. While consumer rights activist Y.G. Muralidharan served in this role for 10 years, the position has remained vacant since his departure. Activists note that this has led to a decline in consumer awareness about KERC's functions. Public hearings, once well-attended, now see minimal participation. "This could be due to the fact that tariff books consist of hundreds of pages and cost over ₹500 a book, which keeps consumers away from it," they said.

Stringent regulations

Activists call for greater transparency, stricter monitoring of escoms, and measures to enhance consumer engagement to ensure that KERC remains relevant and effective in the evolving energy landscape.

KREDL bags second prize for energy efficiency at NECA 2024

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The award ceremony was organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Union Ministry of Power on Saturday as part of National Energy Conservation Day celebrations

The Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) bagged the second prize in the State Energy Efficiency Performance Award (SDA Group-1) category at the National Energy Conservation Awards 2024.

The award ceremony was organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Union Ministry of Power on Saturday as part of National Energy Conservation Day celebrations.

Consistency

"Karnataka has consistently ranked among the top-performing states in energy efficiency, earning the "Front Runner" designation for three consecutive years – 2020, 2021-2022, and 2023 – in the State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI). In the SEEI 2024, Karnataka achieved the second-highest score in the nation, further solidifying its reputation as a leader in energy efficiency and sustainability," said a press release from the Energy Department. "States play a pivotal role in the implementation of India's energy efficiency policies. Karnataka continues to set benchmarks in achieving sustainable development goals through energy-efficient practices. The state has undertaken numerous initiatives to meet its energy efficiency targets effectively," said Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Energy Department.

"KREDL aims to achieve an energy-saving target of approximately 744 million units across five major sectors over the next five years in collaboration with both government and private stakeholders," said K.P. Rudrappaiah, Managing Director, KREDL, after receiving the award.

Christ, CIMA UK host FLP closing ceremony

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The closing and investiture ceremony of the Financial Literacy Program (FLP) organised by Christ (Deemed to be University) in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA, UK) was held on December 14. The FLP was organised under the university's flagship PAN-India project "Schools for Nation".

The event was attended by over 100 alumni from the Department of Professional Studies.

Varghese K.J., Chief Finance Officer of Christ University and others were present.

Woman, daughter die on being hit by ambulance

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A mother and daughter were killed on the spot when a speeding ambulance knocked them down in Vijayapura police station limits on Sunday.

The deceased were identified as Sarojamma, 65, and her daughter Lakshmamma, 45.

While crossing road

They were crossing the road when the Andhra Pradesh-based ambulance, which was returning empty after dropping a patient at a hospital, knocked them down. The deceased were from Pavagada and were returning home after work. They had come to work at an under construction site to get extra money on Sunday.

Driver held

The Vijayapura police have arrested the driver and seized the ambulance.

The police have subjected the driver to medical examination to ascertain whether he was under the influence of alcohol.

Further probe has been launched into the matter.

Italian delegates share expertise on how to sustain human life in space

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A delegation of researchers from the University of Sassari, who were in the city on Sunday as part of Italian Space Day, shared their expertise on how to sustain human life in space and the challenges faced by space researchers and astronauts to support life beyond Earth.

Prof. Plinio Innocenzi, Dr. Alessia Manca, and Dr. Andrada Pica delivered lectures at the Science Gallery Bengaluru on aerospace materials and avionics, astrobiology, and human performance analysis in simulated gravity, respectively. Dr. Pica said that astronauts' exposure to altered gravity environments could lead to significant physiological changes.

She said that, for instance, alteration in the neuro-vestibular system can cause vestibular disorders and space motion sickness.

In the nervous system, there could be damage at the tissue level. Cardiovascular dysfunction can cause heart atrophy and vascular and cardiac alterations.

Prof. Innocenzi said that important challenges lie ahead, especially regarding the exploration of deep space and the colonisation of the Moon and Mars.

20 injured in accident

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Around 20 passengers suffered injuries when a private bus overturned near Muppane in Sagar taluk on Sunday.

A group of residents from Bantwal in Dakshina Kannada district was on a trip to Jog Falls in Sagar taluk. The bus toppled after the driver lost control over the vehicle while negotiating a curve near Muppane.

Local people rushed to rescue the passengers. Of the total 49 passengers, around 20 got injured.

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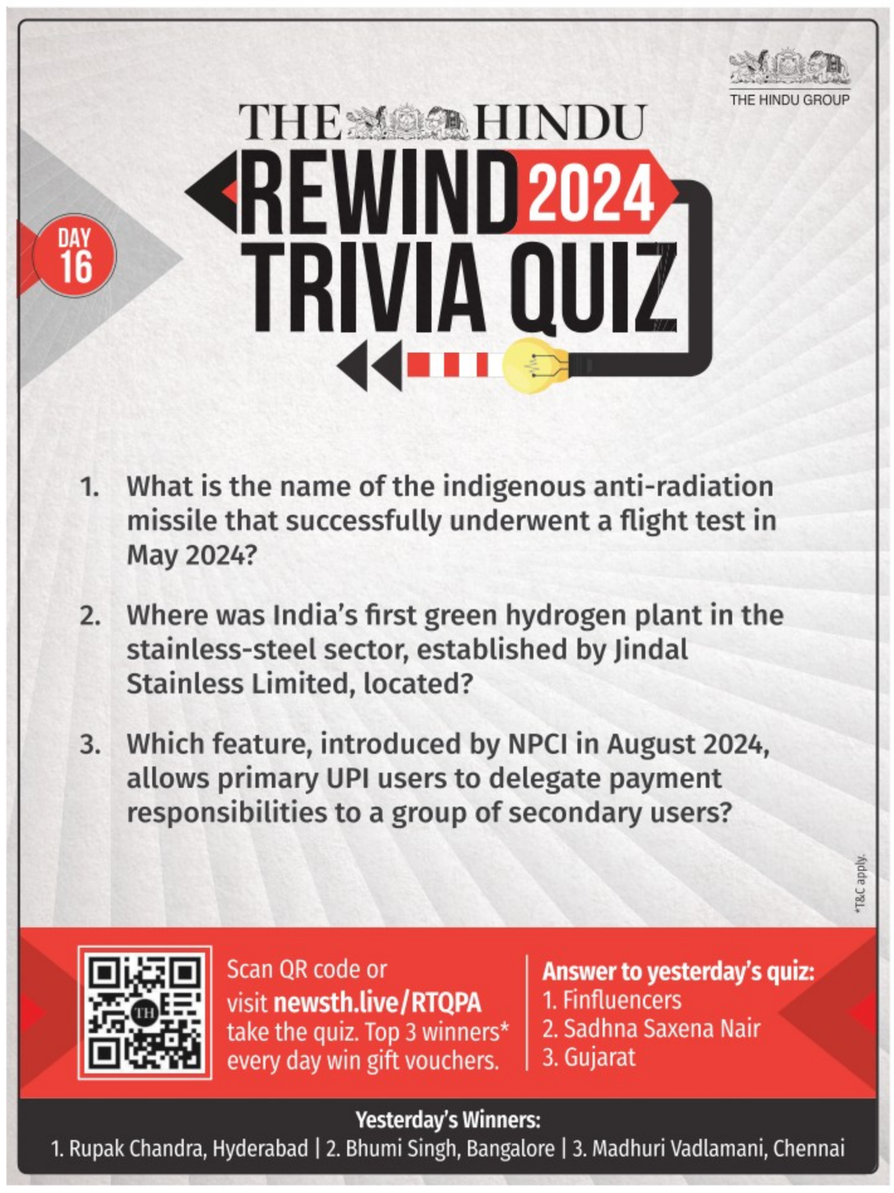

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, DEC. 16		
RISE	06:34	SET 17:57
RISE	18:57	SET 07:24
TUESDAY, DEC. 17		
RISE	06:35	SET 17:57
RISE	19:59	SET 08:23
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18		
RISE	06:35	SET 17:57
RISE	20:57	SET 09:16

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	29	22
Mysuru	29	19
Bengaluru	27	19

Bengaluru Today
26°C The dry weather to prevail. Morning will be slight cool. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be slight cool.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
27°C Rise in day temperature. The weather will be dry. Day will be comfortable. Night will be slight cool.

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THE HINDU
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Syrians who returned to Syria in five days after Assad's fall

7,621 More than 7,600 Syrian migrants crossed the Turkish border to return home in the five days after the fall of Bashar al-Assad. Within 48 hours of Assad's fall, Turkey had increased its daily crossing capacity from 3,000 to between 15,000 to 20,000. AFP

Number of people killed in Mayotte due to Cyclone Chido

14 At least 14 people were killed in Mayotte when a fierce cyclone battered the French Indian Ocean territory, with officials warning it will take days to know the full toll. Rescue workers and supplies are being rushed in by air and sea, but their efforts are likely to be hindered by damage to airports. AFP

The subsidy provided by India to each fisher annually

35 In $. India has pitched the World Trade Organization for regulations on subsidies given by countries that are engaged in fishing activities. An Indian document noted that it provides $35 per fisher annually, compared to subsidies as high as $76,000 per fisher per year in other nations. PTI

Number of migratory bird species recorded in Mathura wetland

192 With winter setting in, the Jodhpur Jhal wetland in Mathura has transformed into a haven for migratory birds from Central Asia, Siberia, Tibet and Mongolia. The wetland has come alive with diverse species, including rare visitors such as the mallard duck and common pochard. PTI

Russian drones destroyed by Ukraine in overnight strike

56 Ukrainian air defences destroyed 56 out of 108 drones launched by Russia during its latest overnight strike, Kyiv's military said. It added that another 49 were "locationally lost", typically a result of electronic jamming. REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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How would a carbon market function?

What are carbon credits and how would they be traded between firms? Why do corporations not want the government to be involved in the issue of carbon credits? Who introduced the concept of carbon credits? Why are some experts critical of carbon offsets?

EXPLAINER

The Hindu Bureau

The story so far:

COP29, the ongoing climate conference in Azerbaijan's capital Baku, has given a fillip to the idea of using carbon markets to curb carbon emissions by approving standards that can help in the setting up of an international carbon market as soon as the coming year.

What is a carbon market?

A carbon market is a market that allows the buying and selling of the right to emit carbon into the atmosphere. Suppose a government wants to limit the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere. It can issue certificates called carbon credits that allow the holder of the certificate to emit a certain amount of carbon into the atmosphere. One carbon credit is equivalent to 1,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide. By limiting the number of carbon credits that are issued, governments can control how much carbon is released into the environment. It should be noted that anyone who doesn't hold carbon credits to their name would not be allowed to emit any carbon into the atmosphere. Carbon credits were first used in the 1990s in the U.S., which introduced the cap-and-trade model to control the emission of sulphur dioxide.

Individuals and firms that hold carbon credits but don't actually need them for any reason can sell their credits to interested buyers. The price at which these carbon credits are traded is determined by market forces, which in this case are the supply of carbon credits and the demand for these certificates. A carbon market can also include the trading of carbon offsets. In this case, a business that pollutes the environment for example, can purchase carbon offsets sold by an environmental NGO that promises to plant trees that suck a certain amount of carbon emissions out of the atmosphere for each offset that it sells.

ISTOCKPHOTO

What is good about carbon markets?

Pollution of the environment and climate change caused by carbon emissions is a classic case of what economists call an externality. An externality is caused when the cost of an economic activity is not properly accounted for (or internalised) by the market price system due to the absence of well-defined property rights. For example, a business that uses raw materials such as iron will have to pay the supplier who owns the iron to be able to procure and use it, thus incurring a certain cost. But when the same firm emits carbon into the atmosphere, it doesn't usually have to pay any money to anyone. In other words, firms are generally able to emit their waste into the atmosphere for free. This of course leads to unhindered pollution of the atmosphere as firms in this case have no financial incentive to curb their carbon emissions. Carbon markets in which the right to pollute is traded for a price can solve the problem by imposing a certain cost on firms for polluting the atmosphere, helping to curb emissions in the process.

The intersection of standardised accounting frameworks and technological advancements has improved the ability of corporations to monitor and report their carbon emissions. While, this is difficult for the vast majority of small businesses in the developing world, particularly in accurately capturing supply chain emissions, ongoing developments, like real-time data tracking of the energy sector, continue to enhance the granularity and reliability of corporate carbon accounting. However, corporations have preferred a voluntary reporting system, like the Carbon Disclosure Project. They have been loathe to government interventions limiting carbon emissions, arguing that such budgeting may lead to output restrictions or rise in costs. They also point to varied production processes, some that might have diverse supply chains that might make it difficult to find the optimal carbon budget for their facilities. Large multinational corporations such as ExxonMobil and General Motors have advocated for carbon markets that allows free trading of carbon credits among firms at a price determined by market forces, that would allow these firms to purchase carbon credits from other firms, which don't need them as much. This they say, helps allocate carbon credits more efficiently than government diktat.

What can go wrong?

Even when there is a functioning carbon market, a government that is not very keen on reducing emissions may increase the supply of carbon credits and drive down the price of the right to pollute, leading to no noticeable drop in emissions. Others may keep a strict cap on the supply of carbon credits but allow firms to cheat by allowing them to illegally emit carbon. The success of carbon offsets also depends on the degree of personal incentive that firm owners possess to care about carbon emissions, which may often be very little. Critics claim that firms that purchase carbon offsets often do it for the sake of virtue signalling and may have little incentive to ensure that their investments in these instruments are actually helping offset carbon emissions. Meanwhile, other critics have raised more fundamental questions regarding how exactly a government would be able to arrive at the optimum supply of carbon credits. They argue that politicians, who do not incur any personal economic cost when they legislate emission reductions, may restrict the supply of carbon credits more than what is really necessary, leading to slower economic growth.

THE GIST

- A carbon market is a market that allows the buying and selling of the right to emit carbon into the atmosphere. Suppose a government wants to limit the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere. It can issue certificates called carbon credits that allow the holder of the certificate to emit a certain amount of carbon into the atmosphere.
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- Even when there is a functioning carbon market, a government that is not very keen on reducing emissions may increase the supply of carbon credits and drive down the price of the right to pollute, leading to no noticeable drop in emissions.

Why is the BJD opposing the Polavaram project?

What are the concerns of tribal communities residing in Odisha's Malkangiri district?

Satyasundar Barik

The story so far:

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has recently intensified its efforts to highlight the potential adverse impacts of the Polavaram Dam project, undertaken by the Andhra Pradesh government, on the tribal communities in Odisha's Malkangiri district. A delegation comprising BJD's Rajya Sabha members submitted a fresh memorandum to the Central Water Commission (CWC), the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change stating that the impact of submergence due to 'unilateral' change in the design of the project has not yet been studied.

What is the status of the project?

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has vowed to complete the Polavaram Project on River Godavari by 2027 as the interstate dispute involving mainly Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh has entered a crucial phase. The Union government has assured ₹15,000 crore in this year's budget for the completion of the project.

However, the BJD has alleged that the CWC had refused to conduct a backwater study for the revised design flood, despite the recommendations of experts and the Odisha Government's concerns regarding the safety of tribal populations. The BJD argued that various studies, including those by the Government of Andhra Pradesh and CWC, have shown different estimates for submergence levels. "A backwater study by AP in 2009 indicates that 50-lakh cusec flood will cause submergence up to 216 feet in Odisha, far exceeding the originally agreed maximum level of 174.22 feet. A report from IIT Roorkee in 2019 further estimates that a flood of 58 lakh cusecs would result in submergence levels of Reservoir Level of 232.28 feet in Odisha," it said.

How did the project start?

The Polavaram Irrigation Project on the river Godavari was conceived as a part of the recommendations of the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal (GWDT). Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha had entered into an agreement dated April 2, 1980, where the project was to be executed by Andhra Pradesh. As per the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganization Act (APRA), 2014, the Polavaram Irrigation Project was declared as a national project.

In response to an RTI query, the Ministry of Jal Shakti said that the maximum height of the concrete dam of Polavaram Project, measured from the deepest foundation level (-18.50m) to the top of bridge is 72.60 metre. The initial project cost was ₹10,151.04 crore in 2005-06 which reached ₹55,548.87 crore in 2019.

What are the concerns?

Though no comprehensive study has been carried out with regards to the likely submergence of the Malkangiri district by backwaters due to the Polavaram project, the Odisha State government in the year 2016 submitted to the NCST that the project was going to submerge 7,656 hectares of land, including forestland, and displace more than 6,800 people including 5,916 tribals in Malkangiri.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti said that as per the Water Resource Department of Andhra Pradesh, by providing remedial measures such as constructing protective embankments for a length of 30 kms along Sileru and Sabari River in Odisha, and 29.12 km along Sabari River in Chhattisgarh, the submergence in both Odisha and Chhattisgarh could be avoided completely. In August this year, the Ministry had asked the State Pollution Control Boards of Odisha and Chhattisgarh to conduct a public hearing for the construction of protective embankments without further loss of time as the project is in an advanced stage of construction. The Odisha State Pollution Control Board is yet to hold a public hearing. The Odisha government had earlier expressed its reservation over the high protective embankment saying it was not feasible. "The construction of an embankment requires the diversion of forestland and creates flooding in Odisha territory."

THE GIST

- The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has recently intensified its efforts to highlight the potential adverse impacts of the Polavaram Dam project, undertaken by the Andhra Pradesh government, on the tribal communities in Odisha's Malkangiri district.
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Many *bagair hukum* cultivators lose hope of land being granted

Sathish G.T.
SHIVAMOGGA

M.M. Rudre Gowda, 65-year-old farmer of Changadihalli in Sakleshpur taluk of Hassan district, has been cultivating a piece of land at Mattur-Margalli for the last three decades. Even after repeated applications under forms 50, 53, and 57 of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, he has not been granted the land.

Mr. Rudre Gowda, head of a family of six members, continues to visit Revenue Department offices and places his request for the grant of land, where he has grown coffee and chikoo (sapota).

Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha members staging a protest in Mysuru demanding the grant of *bagair hukum* land. FILE PHOTO

The designated committee rejected his application because his land was gomala, meant for grazing.

Like him, thousands of farmers across Karnataka have been cultivating small parcels of land without documents of ownership. Such farmers, referred to as *bagair hukum* cultivators, are losing hope of owning the land they cultivated, considering the reasons for which their applications are being rejected by officers at the taluk level.

Applications rejected

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, in response to questions raised in the Legislative Assembly on December 9, stated that his department rejected 2.23 lakh applications, citing various reasons.

The Minister has set a deadline and asked officers to clear the applications within a short period. Officers in the field foresee many rejections, given the conditions the applicants have to meet.

As per the norms, if a farmer is cultivating forest land, or any public land (devarakadu, kaane, soppina betta, gomala) the committee will not approve it. Besides that, if the land is within town limits, within five km in the case of CMCs and 10 km in the case of corporations, such application will be rejected.

> The rule to earmark 30 acres of land for every 100 head of cattle should be changed.
>
> **H.R. NAVEEN KUMAR,** President of the Hassan district unit of the Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha

If the applicant's family already owns over five acres of land, he or she does not deserve an additional grant.

Following a guideline issued by the Revenue Department in 2023, the officers have been asked to process the applications under these conditions before placing them for the committee's consideration. As a result, hundreds of applications are rejected even before the committee comes into the picture.

'Officers in a hurry'

The large-scale rejection of applications has come under criticism. Former Minister and senior Congress leader B. Shivaramu recently alleged that the officers were in a hurry to clear the applications to meet the deadline set by the Minister. He took exception to officers taking the decision without bringing the applications before the committee concerned.

Many applications have been rejected because of the restrictions on granting gomala land. As per the rule, if a village has 100 head of cattle, 30 acres have to be earmarked for grazing.

The MLAs have been putting pressure on the government to relax this rule. However, Mr. Byre Gowda made it clear that any change in the rule would be in violation of three judgements by the Supreme Court.

"The rule to earmark 30 acres of land for every 100 head of cattle should be changed. Similarly, the restrictions on granting land in town limits should be altered. Without these changes, the government cannot address the problem of landless farmers," argued H.R. Naveen Kumar, president of the Hassan district unit of the Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha.

Furthermore, the farmers have been demanding a joint survey of the land by the Revenue and the Forest Departments so that confusion about its nature is resolved. Many farmers have been cultivating lands that have been documented as forest.

'No room for factional politics'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra on Sunday said there is no room for factional politics in the party, and organising meetings to create such a perception was not acceptable.

Speaking in Bengaluru, he urged party leaders holding any such meetings and conferences to immediately stop their activities.

Pointing to media reports about preparations for a show of strength event being organised by a section of party leaders in his favour at Davangere, Mr. Vijayendra said: "There are no factions in the BJP and everyone is a staunch party worker."

Vokkaligara Sangha gets new president

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

B. Kenchappa Gowda was elected president of the Karnataka Vokkaligara Sangha on Sunday. Mr. Gowda (21 votes), who has the backing of KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar, defeated Anjinappa (14 votes), supported by Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

Other office-bearers are: L. Srinivas and K.V. Renukaprasad (vice-presidents), T. Konnappareddy (general secretary), N. Balakrishna (treasurer), and R. Hanumantharayappa (secretary).

Waqf report: BYV terms allegation of bribery illogical

Priyank Kharge posts old video of Anwar Manippady to bolster claim

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra on Sunday dismissed an allegation that he had attempted to bribe former Karnataka State Minorities Commission chairperson Anwar Manippady to hush up a report on waqf encroachments when the BJP was in power and his father B.S. Yediyurappa was the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday and Priyank Kharge, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and IT and BT, on the floor of the House on Friday claimed that Mr. Manippady had publicly accused Mr. Vijayendra of visiting his house and offering ₹150 crore to not discuss his report.

On Sunday, Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Kharge stuck to their stand. Mr. Kharge on social media released an old press conference footage of Mr. Manippady, where he purportedly makes the charge that Mr. Vijayendra and other political leaders had tried to bribe him to hush up the report. Mr. Siddaramaiah even said that the State government had written to the Centre seeking a CBI inquiry.

B.Y. Vijayendra

Priyank Kharge

However, contesting this claim, Mr. Vijayendra said the allegation was illogical, and the Congress leaders were making them as they were "disturbed" by allegations being hurled at them, especially the MUDA case against the Chief Minister.

"When Mr. Yediyurappa was the Chief Minister, Mr. Manippady had submitted a report on the waqf issue, regarding irregularities committed during the previous Congress government and its leaders," Mr. Vijayendra said. "As the then Chief Minister's son, why should I go to Mr. Manippady's house and offer a bribe and that too to save Congress leaders?"

The State BJP chief said the Congress wants to use this issue to waste the time of the legislature during the ongoing Belagavi session. He further said that he would respond to the allegations if raised in the Assembly.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Mangaluru, Mr. Manippady said that Mr. Vijayendra had not come to his house.

"I only spoke to him and expressed displeasure about the delay in tabling the report when Mr. Vijayendra was party vice-president and Mr. Yediyurappa was the Chief Minister once again. There was no ₹150-crore offer," he said.

Reacting to this, Home Minister G. Parameshwara said that there was video footage of Mr. Manippady accusing Mr. Vijayendra and the media had covered it back then.

The controversy gains significance at a time when the BJP is trying to corner the ruling Congress over notices served to farmers and others by the waqf board on properties they allegedly encroached upon.

The BJP has termed it "minority appeasement".

'BJP, JD(S) opposing efforts to empower poor'

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The Opposition is obstructing the government's efforts at empowering the poor by constantly indulging in dividing people on the basis of caste and religion, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Sunday.

"The welfare and development works of our government are clearly visible to the people. But then the BJP is spreading lies that there is no money for development," he said, after launching development works worth nearly ₹200 crore at Ron in Gadag district.

"This year, the State government has allocated ₹1,20,000 crore for development. We are also carrying out various welfare and social security programmes by spending over ₹52,000 crore. Most of this money goes directly into the hands of the people through our guarantee programmes," he said.

"The BJP leaders are falsely claiming there is no money for development. They are repeating the baseless lies in the face of the successful implementation of these programmes. However, the people of the State are not fools to believe these lies," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister said that over 4.5 crore people in the State are directly benefiting from the guarantee schemes.

To support his claims, he cited the example of Mamubi Maldar and her daughter-in-law Roshan Begum who pooled money from the Gruha Lakshmi payments to drill a borewell in Gajendragad of Gadag district.

He congratulated them and called them an example to society.

He inaugurated a millet processing unit in Ron. He said that the State government is promoting the cultivation and consumption of millets in a big way.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaking to reporters at Ron in Gadag district on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

CM: NK issues will be discussed from today

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Three days of the legislature session will be set aside for discussing issues related to north Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Sunday.

He told reporters at Ron in Gadag district that the special discussion will be held on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said on Sunday that the government was open to discussing issues of north Karnataka, but the BJP did not seem to be interested.

Speaking to reporters at Hubballi airport, the KPCC president said: "There is no unity among BJP leaders. They are faction ridden. They have no clear plan for discussions on the floor of the House. They are only interested in playing politics over every issue. They are not at all interested in development".

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH KPP PORTAL ONLY)

KPTCL invites bids for the following works:

No. SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(33)/24-25/6687-89 Date: 10.12.2024

1) Bid enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/24-25/EPR-12/call-2/Dtd:05.09.2024 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and Commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 31.5MVA 66/11KV, M/s Kirloskar Electric Make, Sl No:102XJ007/01, Year of Manufacturing 2011 failed at 66/11KV **Cessna Business Park** Sub-station Lying at 66/11KV Cessna Business Park Sub-Station, TL&SS Division, Hoody Layout on total turnkey basis.

No. SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(33)/24-25/6690-92 Date: 10.12.2024

2) Bid enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/24-25/EPR-62/Dtd:09.12.2024 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and Commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 20MVA 66/11KV (3 Limbs), Bharat Bijiee Ltd Make, Sl No:4767/4, Year of Manufacturing 2003, Power Transformer failed at **66kV Padmanabhanagar Substation** and Lying at 66kV Padmanabhanagar Substation, on total turnkey basis on percentage basis.

No. SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(33)/24-25/6693-95 Date: 10.12.2024

3) Bid enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/EPR-11/call-2 Dtd:05.09.2024 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and Commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 20MVA 66/11KV, Transformers & Rectifier (T&R) make, Sl No:200094, Year of Manufacturing 2007 failed at 66/11KV **Electronic City (Keonics)** Sub-station Lying at 66/11KV Electronics City Sub-Station, TL&SS Division, HSR Layout on total turnkey basis.

No. SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(33)/24-25/6696-98 Date: 10.12.2024

4) Bid enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/24-25/EPR-64/Dtd:09.12.2024 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and Commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 31.5 MVA 66/11KV (3 Limbs), ECE Industries Ltd Make, Sl No:S-86051, Year of Manufacturing 2008, Power Transformer failed at **66/11kV BTM 4TH Phase Substation** and Lying at NRS repair Bay, on total turnkey basis on percentage basis.

No. SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(33)/24-25/6699-701 Date: 10.12.2024

5) Bid enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/24-25/EPR-63/Dtd:09.12.2024 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and Commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 20MVA 66/11KV (3 Limbs), VOLTAMP Make, Sl No: JN8012/7, Year of Manufacturing 2001, Power Transformer failed at **220/66/11kV Khodays Glass Factory Substation** and Lying at 66kV Khodays Glass Factory Substation, on total turnkey basis on percentage basis.

No. SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(33)/24-25/6702-04 Date: 10.12.2024

6) Bid enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/EPR-13/call-2/Dtd:09.09.2024 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (To & Fro), Repair, Testing, Assembling, Erection and Commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 20MVA 66/11KV, Andrew yule Make, Sl No:13017, Year of Manufacturing 2000, failed at 66 KV **Leelaventure** Sub-Station Lying at 220kV HAL Receiving Station, TL&SS Division, Hoody on total turnkey basis.

The Bids will be received through E-Procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject tenders can be got by logging on to **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink 'E Procurement KPTCL' or to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **16.12.2024.**

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CORRIDORS OF POWER

Toll plaza before KIA draws flak

Entrepreneurs of Bengaluru have started questioning the necessity of a toll plaza before the entry to the Kempegowda International Airport. Taking to X, chairman at Aarin Capital T.V. Mohandas Pai *(pictured)* said that no airport in India has a toll gate before entry. "Why discriminate against Bengaluru? We have already paid ₹1,500 crore, very largely for airport entry," he said, tagging Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and Bengaluru MPs.

In response to Mr. Pai's post, Biocon chief Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw justified the demand. "A justified demand to remove toll plaza#Devanahalli before entering Bengaluru airport... Bengaluru must be brought at par with other cities," she said. The opposition to the toll plaza near KIA comes at a time when the plaza recorded its highest-ever toll collection of ₹308.01 crore in the fiscal year 2023-24.

BJP slams CM for help to Wayanad

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's *(pictured)* letter to his counterpart in Kerala on construction of 100 houses for those who lost them in the Wayanad landslide has once again triggered strong objection from the BJP. It has alleged that the Congress government's willingness to purchase land for the housing project was "appeasement politics." The BJP slammed Mr. Siddaramaiah for prioritising building houses in Wayanad over addressing the State's issues, while accusing him of appeasing Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MP.

The BJP on X accused the government of "failing Karnataka", highlighting the maternal deaths in Ballari, crumbling infrastructure, and so on. It also questioned why taxpayers' money was being directed to another State. BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra asked whether Mr. Siddaramaiah was "working for the State's people or the Gandhi family." Earlier too, the Congress government's decision to pay compensation of ₹15 lakh for the death of a person in Wayanad following an attack by an elephant from the State has been strongly criticised.

Who will listen to NK issues?

When the time arrives for the legislature session in Belagavi, all leaders talk grandly of how it will help in deliberating on issues concerning the development of north Karnataka. However, when it comes to participating in the deliberations, a majority of the leaders irrespective of their political parties and region tend to do the opposite.

In the first week of the legislature session, this was what happened in the Upper House. On the first day of discussion on north Karnataka issues in the Council, there were less than 20 MLCs. The next day when the discussion on the subject resumed, there were little over 20 members. Even more troubling was the fact that a majority of the Council members representing the region too were missing when the discussion happened.

Nagesh Prabhu
Girish Pattanashetti

Departments merged

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has issued an order merging the Food Safety and Quality Control Department with the Drugs Control Department, and has named it the Food Safety and Drugs Administration (FDA). This will now be headed by the Food Safety Commissioner. This follows a decision taken in a recent Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet had approved the merger for better coordination and better services. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said: "The Drugs Control Department needs supervision in quality control. Large companies that supply quality drugs should be allowed to participate in the tenders called by KSMCL. The quality of drugs and production needs to be checked more thoroughly."

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

14th ANNIVERSARY

Born: 04.12.1960 Died: 16.12.2010
Mr. G.PADMANABHAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR
Pay our homage with thanks.
Family Members & Employees of
INDELECT TECHNOLOGIES PVT. LTD, CHENNAI
Ct: 93802 43402 / 9382543299

1ST ANNIVERSARY

Mrs.BHARATHI SAMARAO
W/o.Late. V.N.Sama Rao,
Advocate, Vellore.
Birth: 07.12.1935 Death: 16.12.2023
Lived as 'Exemplary Example' for a " Noble Soul "
Fondly remembered by:
VALLUR FAMILY MEMBERS

FROM THE ARCHIVES

GETTY IMAGES

Why simultaneous elections are impractical and complicated

Critics of simultaneous elections have raised a few objections. First, the logistical nightmare of conducting simultaneous elections in a country of a little over 1.4 billion people, in a context where even State elections need to take place in multiple phases

Gautam Bhatia

The Winter Session of the Lok Sabha is currently underway. The introduction of the two Bills which would enable simultaneous elections in the country, mainly the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill 2024 and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment Bill) 2024, have now been postponed to a later date. In this article, Gautam Bhatia, explains the problem with such a concept.

In recent weeks, there has been increasing discussion about the possibility of having national and State elections at the same time, popularly known as 'one nation, one election'. The formation of a committee, helmed by a former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, to determine how this might be implemented, and what manner of constitutional changes might be required to make it a legal reality, have generated further debate. The primary arguments in favour of simultaneous elections are twofold: first, that it will decrease the costs of conducting elections (and of electioneering); and second, that it will free up political parties from being in 'permanent campaign mode', and allow them to focus on governance (and, for that matter, constructive opposition) for a five-year period.

Point and counterpoint

Against this, critics have pointed out that when you crunch the numbers, the actual financial savings are relatively minuscule. Furthermore, it is a relatively recent pathology of the Indian political system that central government Ministers and politicians spend a significant amount of time campaigning in State elections: if the concern, therefore, is that frequent State elections hamper governance and the business of Parliament, then simultaneous elections seem a needlessly complicated answer when a simple one is available: that State elections should be primarily fought by State party units, while national politicians can get on with the task of governance. The reality, however, is that the increasingly centralised – and presidential – character of Indian election campaigns means that this is unlikely to be a reality in the near future.

Critics of simultaneous elections have raised a few other objections. First, the logistical nightmare of conducting simultaneous elections in a country of a little over 1.4 billion people, in a context where even State elections need to take place in multiple phases.

The second, and graver concern, is the incompatibility of a rigid election timetable with some of the fundamentals of parliamentary democracy: as is well-known, at the time of Independence, central and State elections were conducted simultaneously. This arrangement broke down towards the end of the 1960s because of the use of Article 356 of the Constitution, which authorises the Union to suspend (or even dismiss) State governments in a narrowly-defined range of circumstances; but also, and apart from that, the essence of parliamentary democracy is that at all times, the government must enjoy the confidence of the House, failing which it must step down, and go back to the people for a fresh mandate.

Consequently, it is obvious that even if, legally and practically, one is able to synchronise central and State elections for one cycle, this will break down the moment a government falls. To this, two solutions have been proposed, both of which tend to make the problem worse. The first is that President's Rule (that is, central rule) will be imposed in that State until the five-year-period is over. Needless to say, this will starkly undermine both federalism and democracy. The second is that elections will be held in that State, but the term of the new Assembly will only be until the next cycle (which could be in a year, or three years, or four years). Not only does this undercut both the justifications for simultaneous elections – cost and an avoidance of continuous campaign – but, rather, leads to perverse incentives (for example, how much 'governance' will a State government be able to do if elections are scheduled in a year?).

The possibility of 'horse-trading'

The upshot of this is that there will be a strong push towards avoiding the fall of a government, even when it has lost the confidence of the House in the ordinary course of things. And, as we have seen in India, there is an almost institutionalised remedy for this: defections, or "horse-trading". It is, by now, clear that the Tenth Schedule's prohibition on horse-trading has been rendered more or less a dead letter, as politicians have found various ways to get around this (and courts have not been successful in stopping it). Thus, as was pointed out by lawyer and parliamentarian Kapil Sibal in an interview recently, simultaneous elections are likely to see an explosion of horse-trading, where the political parties with the biggest pockets will be the biggest beneficiaries.

While these intractable issues speak to the implementation of simultaneous elections, at a deeper level, there are two principled and interrelated arguments against the idea: federalism and democracy.

First, let us take federalism. Over the years, it has increasingly come to be accepted that Indian federalism is not simply a matter of administrative convenience but also a matter of principle that recognises the legitimacy of linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and other forms of collective aspiration, through the grant of Statehood. In this context, there is, of course, Indian democracy at the central level, but also, at the level of each State, democracy takes its own set of claims, demands, and aspirations. Simultaneous elections risk a blurring of these distinct forums and arenas of democracy, with the risk that State-level issues will be subsumed into the national (this is inevitable, given the cognitive dominance of the national, as well as the fact that national-level parties frequently campaign in a national register, for understandable reasons).

Keeping absolute power in check

A related point is that in our constitutional scheme, the federal structure is an important check upon the concentration of power (buttressed by the existence of the Rajya Sabha at the central level).

The federal structure, in turn, is sustained by a plurality of democratic contests, and a plurality of political outfits, at the State level. Simultaneous elections, for the reasons pointed out above, risk undermining that plurality, and risk precisely the kind of concentration of power that federalism is meant to be a bulwark against.

Second, on democracy: despite the ringing words with which the Preamble of the Constitution begins, the "People" have very little space in the Constitution, especially when it comes to exercising control over their representatives. Unlike many other Constitutions, where public participation in law-making is a guaranteed right, along with other rights such as the right to recall, in the Indian constitutional scheme, elections are the only form of public participation in the public sphere. There is a different conversation to be had about why this is not enough, but given this framework, relatively regular and frequent elections allow for more extended public participation and debate; simultaneous elections would shrink this scope substantially, without any countervailing changes to deepen it in other domains.

Therefore, it is clear that the administrative benefits from simultaneous elections are overstated at best, and non-existent at worst. However, the costs, both in the implementation and in the concept itself, are significant, and create non-trivial risks when it comes to protecting and preserving the federal and democratic design of the Constitution. These, therefore, are good reasons why the idea is a bad one, and ought not to be acted upon.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

He's sweating bullets in the meeting

The policeman was caught lining his pockets, and now he has been suspended without pay

S. Upendran

"Where is Ajay? I thought the three of us were going out for breakfast."

"Ajay sends his apologies. He has an interview this afternoon. So, he..."

"That's right! Forgot all about the big interview. For some reason, I thought it was tomorrow. How is Ajay doing? Is he, as usual, sweating bullets?"

"Sweating bullets? Are you asking if he's sweating profusely?"

"The expression 'sweating bullets' is limited to informal contexts in American English. When you say that someone is sweating bullets, you mean the person looks extremely nervous."

"In other words, the person is worried about something, and is therefore sweating profusely!"

"I guess you could say that! In this case, however, the focus is more on the worried or nervous look, rather than on the sweating. When I met him, Ajay was sweating bullets over the interview."

"How about this example? The moment I heard my boss wanted to see me, I started sweating bullets."

"Sounds good! Every time I'm asked to make a presentation, I sweat bullets."

"But tell me, why 'bullets'? How is it possible for anyone to sweat bullets."

"It's not real bullets that the person is sweating. The individual is so worried that the drops of perspiration forming on his forehead are the size of bullets."

"That makes sense! So, tell me, how is your boss doing? Is he still torturing everyone?"

"Didn't I tell you? My boss was fired last week. Everyone celebrated."

"That's not a nice thing to do. But why? Was he caught lining his pocket?"

"Lining his pocket? What are you talking about?"

"When you accuse someone of lining his pocket, what you mean is that the individual was taking bribes."

"In other words, he was making money through illegal means."

"Exactly!"

"My boss has been lining his pocket for many years now."

"I see. It's also possible to say, 'line one's own pockets'. According to rumours, the President of our Housing Society found various ways to line his own pockets."

"I'm sure he did. By the way, how was the concert yesterday? Did you and you friends enjoy it?"

"What concert? It started raining buckets an hour before it was supposed to start. So, the organisers called it off."

"Raining buckets? Does it mean to rain quite heavily?"

"Not just heavily. But also, for a long time. Here's example. It's been raining buckets the past two days. So, it's not surprising that they decided to close the airport."

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THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On December 16 every year, 'Vijay Divas' is celebrated to commemorate the victory of the Indian Armed Forces in the 1971 Indo-Pak War. A quiz on the war and its operations

Vembu Shankar

QUESTION 1
What was the name of the offensive operation launched by the Indian Navy on Pakistan's port city of Karachi during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971?

QUESTION 2
How many days did the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War last?

QUESTION 3
Who was the Chief of Army Staff for India during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War?

QUESTION 4
What codename was assigned for the pre-emptive strikes carried out by the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on the forward airbases and radar installations of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on the evening of December 3, 1971?

QUESTION 5
What was the name of the Pakistani naval submarine sunk by India in the 1971 war?

QUESTION 6
Who is the only member of the Indian Air Force to be honoured with the Param Vir Chakra posthumously for his gallant action in the defence of the Srinagar Air Field in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971?

QUESTION 7
Who commanded the guerrilla resistance movement titled Mukti Bahini during the 1971 war?

Visual question:
Which Pakistan General signed the Instrument of Surrender and handed over his weapon to Lt Gen J. S. Aurora? AFP

Questions and Answers to the December 13 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The given name of Raj Kapoor and the names of his two brothers. **Ans: Ranbir Raj Kapoor and his brothers were Shamsher (Shammi) and Balbir (Shashi)**
2. The 1935 film in which he debuted and the film in which he got his big break. **Ans: *Inquilab; Neel Kamal***
3. The first film under the R.K. films banner. **Ans: *Aag;* The logo of the company was based on a scene from *Barsaat***
4. This duo had its debut with *Barsaat*. **Ans: Shankar Jaikishan**
5. *Awaara* and *Boot Polish* were nominated for this award. **Ans: Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival**
6. He was working on this film when he died. **Ans: *Henna***
7. This Hrishikesh Mukherjee classic is dedicated to Raj Kapoor. **Ans: *Anand***
8. This film had Raj Kapoor, Prithviraj and Randhir. **Ans: *Kal Aaj Aur Kal***
Visual: Name the person Raj Kapoor is hugging. **Ans: Mukesh, who was the 'voice' of Raj Kapoor**
Early Birds: Nobody got all the correct answers.
Colonel Vembu Shankar, SC is an Indian Army veteran.

Word of the day

Rime:
ice crystals forming a white deposit (especially on objects outside); correspondence in the sounds of two or more lines (especially final sounds); be similar in sound, especially with respect to the last syllable

Synonyms: frost, hoar, rhyme

Usage: *The rime was thick and crisp on the grass.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/rimepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɹaɪm/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

‘Libraries are key elements of social justice’

Bengaluru Public Libraries, an initiative by the IIHS with the Max Mueller Bhavan, puts the focus on building public institutions like libraries and archives, which should be more heard and seen

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Goethe-Institut Library. IIHS MEDIA LAB

Mythic Society Library. IIHS MEDIA LAB

It’s a Saturday. The midmorning sun beats down on the 40-odd people alighting from a bus and fanning across the quiet interiors of the Mythic Society library housed in the Daly Memorial Hall on Nrupathunga Road, a gorgeous heritage building constructed in 1917.

We walk past glass-shuttered shelves holding books about India’s prehistory, a translation of A.R. Krishna Shastri’s *Vachana Bharatha* and the library’s enviable collection of rare manuscripts and books. We flip open one, *The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot into the Levant* by the French traveller, botanist and linguist Jean de Thévenot, to find ourselves stumbling across an unfamiliar, now-forgotten letter – the archaic long ‘s’ written as ‘I’ – catapulting us to a time before it was discarded by most printers in the latter half of the 18th century.

The Mythic Society library is one of the five we visit as part of the recently-held Bengaluru Public Libraries, an initiative by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan. The other four covered include the Goethe-Institut Library, the State Central Library in Cubbon Park, the Alliance Francaise de Bangalore Library and finally, the IIHS Library.

Preedip Balaji, the founding librarian at IIHS, Sadashivanagar, who curated the walk, expands on why these specific libraries were chosen. According to him, institutions, even public-funded ones, often make it hard for people to just walk into their libraries to use them. The publicness of a library, therefore, became a central aspect of this walk.

While at first glance, all these libraries are different from each other, aesthetically and thematically, one thing ties them all together: they are accessible to everyone who wants to use them. “Of course, there are membership plans and other things if you want to check out. But there is no cost for walk-ins, and many services are free. That was one major factor that we looked at,” he says. “I see the library door as a critical element of social justice.”

Genesis of the idea

The idea for a walk of this sort emerged in 2019 as part of IIHS’s City Scripts, the institute’s annual urban writing festival. “We could conceptualise it and make public libraries be just a part of the festival,” says Balaji, pointing out that they could add to the narrative around promoting literature and writing in this case. While many literature festivals occur nationwide, public libraries don’t get spoken about often enough at these festivals. “That was the idea, and we thought we could do it,” he says. “The idea is to voice the concerns of building public institutions like libraries, which would be more heard, seen and participated in as they manifest time and space in our cultural memory and crucially safeguard our democracy through principles of freedom, access, and inclusion.”

State Central Library. K BHAGYA PRAKASH

The initial two iterations of the walk, in 2019 and 2020, took place on a smaller scale, with only three libraries covered: the Mythic Society Library, the State Central Library in Cubbon Park, and the IIHS Library. Then, the pandemic happened, and everything came to a standstill for two years, including these walks. “We’ve been meaning to pick this up for a while and have been looking for sponsors who could help us to scale it up from the original conceptualisation we had,” says Balaji. “In the Goethe-Institut, we found a good partner who understood and provided the means.”

IIHS Library. IIHS MEDIA LAB

Sheshagiri Kulkarni, who heads the library at the Goethe-Institut, believes that this recent partnership also helped create the “wow” factor. “The walk was on a smaller scale before,” he says. “But in our case, we brought buses, added more libraries and included lunch, breakfast and all that,” he says.

A robust system

Public institutions like libraries and archives, which hold the nation’s memory, help build narratives which collectively speak for the truth, making them “a crucial asset for the nation,” believes Balaji. Unfortunately, he thinks libraries aren’t discussed enough in the national media. “Many stories are happening with libraries at the centre, state, and local levels, but it doesn’t go mainstream,” he says. He feels that the GLAM sector, which includes libraries, archives, museums, and galleries, needs more government spending and must be more integrated. For instance, the One Nation, One Subscription, under implementation, should include providing access to science information to the tax-paying public to build an inclusive library ecosystem with strong public library laws. “Libraries are not...cannot be a siloed institution,” he argues.

As someone who himself didn’t have access to books but textbooks while growing up, Balaji is also fully aware of the need to create a library culture in the country and cultivate a reading habit in children. “Much of our public doesn’t have access to different kinds of books,” he says, adding that reading plays a vital role in kindling the imagination. Merely looking at books as something used to prepare for competitive exams is restrictive, in his opinion. “Reading as a pleasurable activity should be part of our growing up.”

Alliance Francaise de Bangalore Library. IIHS MEDIA LAB

State Central Library. IIHS MEDIA LAB

Even though India has a fairly robust library system, especially in the South Indian states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, their full potential has not been explored, adds Kulkarni. “In Western countries, they organise events in libraries. That is missing here,” he says, pointing out that people mostly flock to libraries to study for competitive entrance exams. “Our libraries are full, but they are not always used meaningfully, I would say.”

Having said that, there have been some positive attempts to strengthen Karnataka’s rural public library system, thanks to the efforts of Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka, he adds. “They have taken so much interest, and there has been a drastic change in a very positive way.”

Need to promote libraries

Every year, between November 14 and 20, the Indian Library Association (ILA) celebrates National Library Week in honour of the public library activist Padmashri Iyyanki (Ayyanki) Venkata Ramanayya. “We were waiting for the right opportunity,” says Kulkarni, adding that library week was a perfect occasion to kickstart the walk.

At first, they were not sure if they would get enough participants, says Kulkarni, who credits Dr. Michael Heinst, the Director of the Goethe-Institut, Bengaluru, with buoying the initiative. “He comes from Germany, which has a good book-reading culture, and he told us to go ahead with it.”

Overwhelming response

Though expectations were kept relatively low, they soon found themselves overwhelmed by the public response to the walk: there were over 200 registrations, which led to them to do the same walk on two separate Saturdays, the originally-planned November 16 and again, on November 30.

He recalls how many people were surprised by the public library system in Bengaluru, with many wanting to register at these libraries right away. This, of course, is a desired outcome of a walk that was intended to be “not touristy, but exposure to public libraries. Libraries are not a one-time affair. People need to come back to them, feels Kulkarni. He also believes that initiatives like this can help draw more people into libraries. The intention, he says, is to keep doing walks like this regularly and add more libraries to the network. “I think people are interested. The only thing is we need to promote libraries more.”

The Nomad’s Haven: A global film festival exploring home, belonging, and nostalgia in Bengaluru

The festival at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavanagudi, is open to audiences of all ages and entry is free

Yemen S.
BENGALURU

The Nomad’s Haven, a unique three-day international film festival on home, belonging, and nostalgia, organised by Bangalore Film Society in collaboration with Marupakkam, Gamana Women’s Collective and Indian Institute of World Culture, will take place from December 16 to 18.

For youngsters

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Georgekutty A.L., Secretary, of Bangalore Film Society, said that the purpose of the film festival is to introduce youngsters to contemporary socio-cultural issues. “The festival will also help youngsters start their own self-search for peace and tranquillity amidst conflicts and chaos. ‘Home’ in that sense becomes the wide world ‘self’ wants to recreate and belong with others in harmony,” he added.

A still from the film Namarali. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

“The films are both national and international documentaries in various languages that seek to entertain and educate, make us laugh and weep, question and hope. The festival is a non-commercial and non-ticketed event, designed to inspire and engage youth by exploring contemporary socio-cultural issues. Through carefully curated films, we aim to spark self-reflection and dialogue on themes of home, belonging, and the quest for peace and tranquillity amidst the complexities of modern life,” Georgekutty explained.

Spread over three days, the festival will feature films from across India and other countries like Australia, France, Afghanistan, Finland, China and Sri Lanka, in various languages including English, Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Bengali, Konkani, Assamese, Chinese, Finish, Persian, French and Mizo.

The Nomad’s Haven festival starts off with the film *Home* by Nina Sabnani, an animated memoir that reflects on her mother’s poignant memories of partition and the reclaiming of lost childhood. Some of the other films to watch out for are Nundrisha Wakhloo’s *Cat’s Attic* which explores ancestral ties and collective memory through a Kashmiri attic. *In Search of Ajantrik* - a film by Meghnath that delves into Ritwik Ghatak’s film *Ajantrik*, examining its themes and contemporary socio-political relevance in Jharkhand. *Gotho* - Sainath Uskaikar‘s heartfelt “film letter” to his grandmother, blending personal moments with cinematic expression.

From Karnataka

Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know, a popular film from Karnataka, that recently made name at the at Cannes Film Festival will also be presented at the festival. The film by Chidananda Naik is a poetic tale of how a stolen rooster disrupts village life in rural Karnataka. Ilakkiya Simon ‘s *A Letter to Lanka* navigates Sri Lanka’s civil war scars and political unrest, exploring themes of home and identity.

Meanwhile, *Introspection of Different Cultures in My Life* a film by Amizthan Athimoolam, reflects and embraces vulnerabilities and multicultural experiences. Ayon Pratim Saikia intertwines identity and nature through the lens of an Assamese river in the film *Lullaby of Waves*. With many more films, the festival ends with the screening of a Persian film from India, fascinated by Iran’s film culture and the poetic works of the feminist poet Forough Farrokhzad, titled *And, Towards Happy Alleys* directed by Sreemoyee Singh.

The shows start from 2.30 p.m, at the Wadia Hall, Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavanagudi. The festival is open to audiences of all ages and entry is free. Registration details and the schedule is available on https://linktr.ee/BangaloreFilmSociety .

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 16, 1974

Bangalore Development Authority proposed

Bangalore, Dec. 15: A draft bill in regard to the creation of a Bangalore Development Authority would be submitted to the Government in a week’s time, Mr. B.T. Somanna, Chairman City Improvement Trust Board, said here to-day. He said unless the municipal corporation, a democratic body, was involved in the proposed authority it would not be a success.

Mr. Somanna was answering questions at the “Meet the press” programme of the Karnataka Union of Working Journalists and the Mysore Journalists Cooperative Society.

Chief Minister’s Stress on Population Control

Bangalore, Dec. 15: The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. D. Devaraj Urs, stressed here yesterday the need to maintain parity between growth in population and the growth in economy. He said the population forecast of one billion by the end of this century, could no longer be taken lightly. It will mean a socio-economic and ecological disaster of the first magnitude. The situation should be prevented by considering population control a national imperative, he said.

CITYBEATS

Carnival with a cause

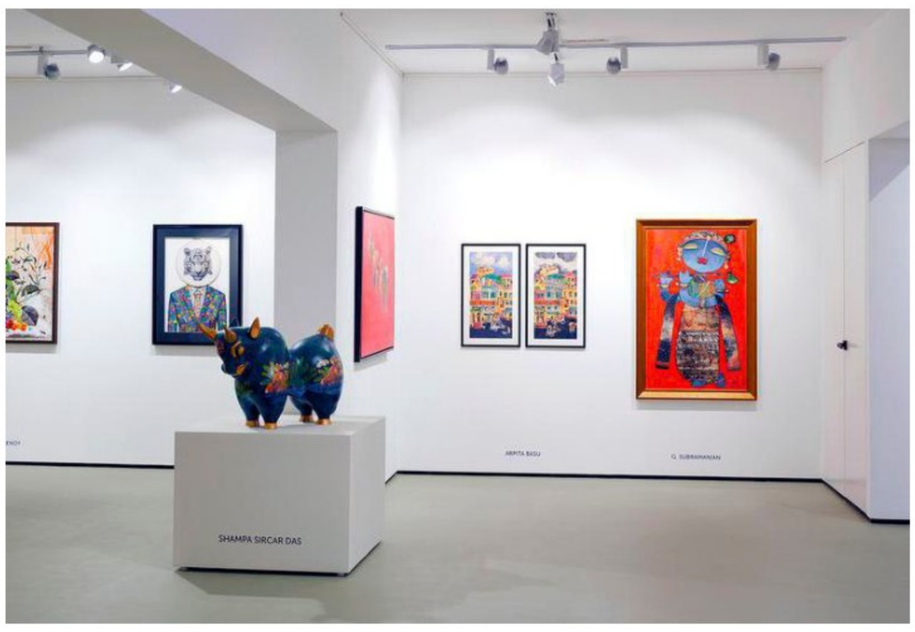
DECEMBER 19, 20
St Joseph's School will host La Feria, a two-day carnival with games, rides and a flea market, as well as musical performances by Swahaa Band, and Tzeitel's Klezmer Trio. Proceeds will go to scholarships for differently-abled children.
At St Joseph's School, Vittal Mallaya Road. From 9.30am-5pm on Day One, 5pm-9pm on Day Two. For details call 080-22226045 / 6366695008.

Winter wonder

ONGOING
PizzaExpress's Snowball Doughball is back again this winter. A doughball is a sweet treat with a hint of cinnamon, secret in-house vanilla cream and a topping of Nutella. Avail seasonal offers featuring wine with your pizza, and more.
Available at all outlets of PizzaExpress in Bengaluru. From 11.30am-11.30pm. Call 9632855858 for details

Great bakes

DECEMBER 21, 22
Bakeree will be at BLR Brewing Co for a Christmas bake sale with a range of goodies starting at ₹149. From gooey cookies and custard-filled brioche doughnuts to sticky toffee date and carrot cake served with a warm toffee date pouring sauce and more, there is a lot to indulge your sweet tooth this season.
At BLR Brewing Co, Whitefield, from 12pm.



Art's new address Founders Varun Backliwal and Lisa Jain at Artisera, (clockwise from left) views of the gallery, installation art by KR Santhana Krishnan, sculpture by Dinkar Jadhav. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Artisera has opened an art gallery in the city after successfully completing an online presence for nine years

A new home for creativity

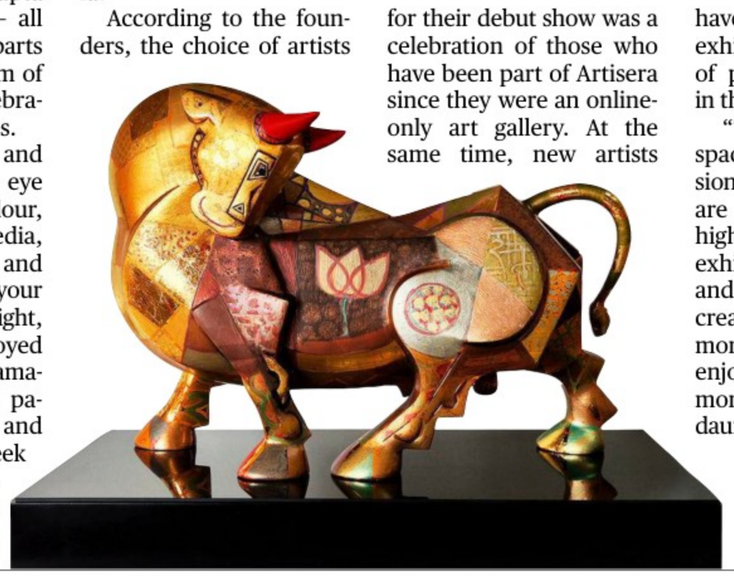
Ruth Dhanaraj

After making a name for themselves in the online art space over the past nine years, Artisera threw open the doors of their first-ever physical space in Bengaluru last week, with an inaugural show. Titled, Realm of Possibilities, the exhibition features some of the best-loved names in India's contemporary art circuit.

Initially founded by Varun Backliwal and Lisa Jain as an online art gallery in 2019, Artisera displayed the works of as many as 34 artists at the unveiling of their physical space. From well known artists such as Laxman Aelay, Gurudas Shenoy, Ashok Bhowmick and Vinita Karim to emerging names such as Smruthi Gargi Eswar, Ashu Gupta and Dushyant Patel – all hailing from different parts of the country – Realm of Possibilities is a celebration of artistic treasures.

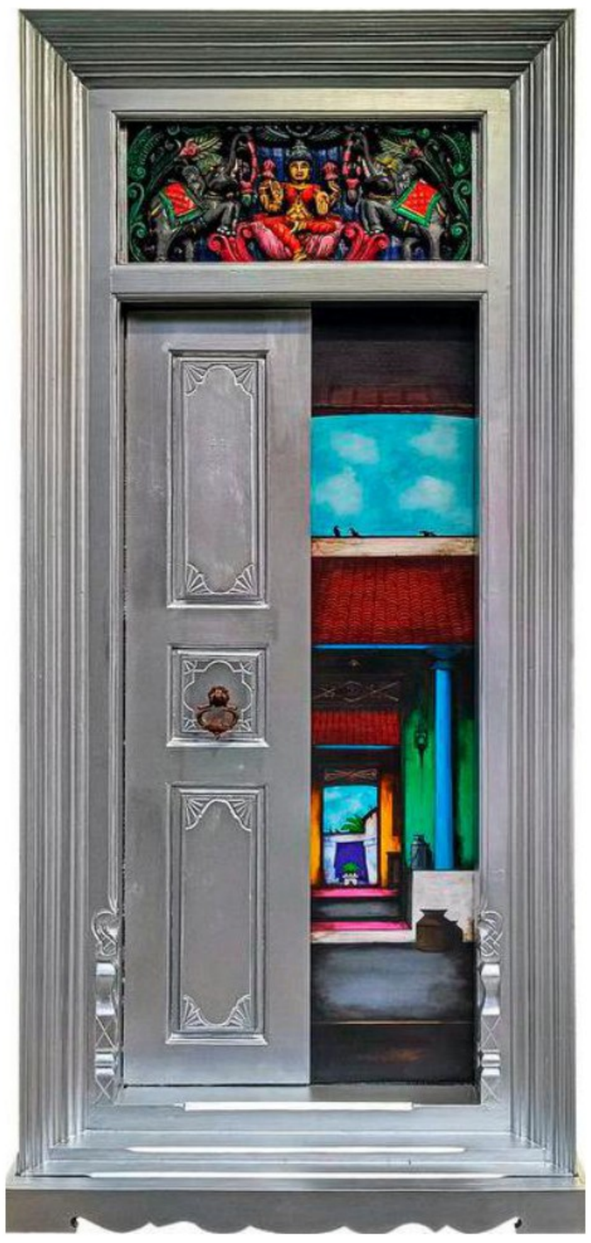
A burst of colour and creativity greets your eye as works in watercolour, acrylics, mixed media, sculptures, oils, inks and more, patiently await your attention. From the bright, jewel-like hues employed by HR Das and G Subramanian to the soothing palette of Claire Iono and stunning detail of Viveek Sharma's work, an entire spectrum of art is on display, including charming sculptures by Shampa Sircar Das, Dinkar Jadhav and Kandi Narsimlu.

According to the founders, the choice of artists for their debut show was a celebration of those who have been part of Artisera since they were an online-only art gallery. At the same time, new artists have been included in the exhibition in anticipation of possible opportunities in the future.



"This physical gallery space is a natural progression in our journey, and we are excited about bringing high quality, curated art exhibitions to Bangalore, and at the same time, creating opportunities for more people to be able to enjoy art by making it more accessible and less daunting," says Varun.

Artisera is a sensible, subtle space, which not only gives artists ample room to showcase larger works, but also affords viewers the luxury of contemplating a piece at leisure. Plain white walls that do not distract and select lighting ensures that the works of art remain the focus. The artists' names lie unobtrusively along the bottom of the wall that their work is displayed on; it does not deflect observation, neither is there a need to squint to ascertain who the creator could be.



The gallery also has a thoughtfully designed storage area where clients can browse through works that are not on display

Spanning 4,000 square feet, there is no dearth of space at Artisera and, the founders have had the foresight to invest in a thoughtfully designed storage area where clients can browse through works that are not on display.

While Realm of Possibilities will conclude by the end of the year, the founders already have an exciting lineup of artists to welcome 2025. "We are introducing a concept of 'Mini Exhibitions', where we will showcase a small body of work created by renowned senior artists in a marked departure from their usual style," says Varun, adding that the first two artists they will be exhibiting in this format are Hyderabad-based Laxman Aelay and Bengaluru's Gurudas Shenoy.

"We will then have an exciting group show featuring three women artists – Smruthi Gargi Eswar, Ashu Gupta and Rakhee Shenoy – who are experimenting with technique, material and subjects. This will be followed by our next big solo exhibition with Delhi-based artist Gurmeet Marwah, known for his satirical art work."

Varun adds that Artisera's aim is to showcase emerging artists whose works have not been seen in Bengaluru before. Plans to emerge as a community space for art and heritage, are also in the works.

Realm of Possibilities will be on display till December 20. Artisera is on the 3rd Floor, BKN Ambaram Estates, 648/L, 1st Main, Indiranagar Stage 1.

Silver screen's Telugu connect

Neeraja Murthy

Television actor Pallavi Gowda has a penchant for versatility. "I love being Arundhati and Mithuna," she says referring to her roles in two Telugu serials *Nindu Noorella Savaasam* and *Yevandoi Srimati Garu* airing on Zee Telugu and Gemini respectively. "I love acting in these two serials as they allow me to play different characters," she says.

Penchant for versatile roles A still from *Nindu Noorella Savaasam*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Reel mother

Arundhati aka Aru in *Nindu Noorella*...is the 'soul' of the family. Pallavi plays this ideal daughter-in-law who will do anything to keep her family safe and happy. But when she dies and lands in Yamaloka, she enlists the help of Chitragupta to help save her family.

Pallavi is overwhelmed with responses on playing a guardian angel to her reel son. "Viewers connect with my role. Some, who have lost their mothers, told me they feel as if their mother is watching over them as an angel, and cherish the moments." This metaphysical role in this 400+ episode daily serial won her two awards in the recent Zee Kutumbam Awards 2024.

In *Yevandoi*... her character Mithuna raises her sister's son as her own, leading to some repercussions . She falls in love with Gautam and the duo live together as husband and wife, only to manage expenses.

Sharing a bond

A Kannadiga born and brought up in Bengaluru, Pallavi made a mark in Telugu television in 2014 with *Pasupu Kumkuma,* a remake of the Kannada serial *Chi Sow Savithri*. Apart from films and web series, the past decade also saw her working in Kannada and Malayalam. "I feel blessed to receive the warmth and positive response," says Pallavi, referring to her growth in television and the bond she shares with co-workers. "I never thought I would work outside Karnataka. I came to a new place (Hyderabad) and worked with strangers who have now become best friends; they are now like an extended family."

Love for cooking

When not shooting, Pallavi enjoys chilling out with her best friend Nisha Lokhande in Bengaluru or rustling up new recipes. Pallavi's culinary journey began during her school years. Having grown up in a joint family, she watched her mother and aunts jot down recipes from shows on television and treat family members to delicacies. "Eating dishes like chicken fried rice or gobi manchurian on Sundays felt like a celebration." While coconut *burfi* was the first dish she prepared, her culinary exploration includes some humorous moments, such as when an uncle saw the cracks on her *ragi sangati* and asked if it had been struck by lightning!

Pallavi is a multi-linguist; she can speak Kannada, Telugu, English, Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam. Awaiting the release of her much-delayed Kannada film *Brahma Raksha* ("I worked for it in 2022, I don't know why it is getting delayed"), Pallavi says, "Acting is both my passion and profession. Whether in television or films, I want to take up roles that leave a lasting impression, and entertain my fans."

Making mushrooms sing

Anasuya Menon

As the curious audience listened with rapt attention, the moonlit evening was filled with the music of plants and mushrooms, an experience entirely new to many.

Tarun Nayar, the biologist-turned-musician from Canada, who can make mushrooms and plants sing, was at Bengaluru's recently-concluded Echoes of Earth music festival..

Tarun has been creating music out of plants, mushrooms and even trees by tapping into their electrical impulses and interpreting them musically. An experiment that evolved during the pandemic years, Tarun developed it into a full time project, Modern Biology in 2021, where he connected plants to synthesisers, allowing humans to listen to the changes in their bio electric activity as music. This, says Tarun, was his way of connecting with the natural world.

For someone who loved synthesisers and Nature, he had been contemplating ways to bring the two together. He soon began taking his performances into the middle of Nature and started improvising with the natural soundscape. For this, he built his own analog synthesisers, too.

"It is akin to connecting a plant/mushroom to a device similar to a lie detector, adapted for the use of plants and fungi, and listening to the flow of their electrical impulse," he says. Tarun then improvises upon these sounds, quantising them (aligning notes and rhythms to a timing) and what emerges is a unique symphony. The melodies may be unorthodox, but it has won him fans from around the world.

Four years into his project, Tarun has travelled with his plant music, delighting people wherever he goes. He posted his experiments on social media platforms regularly, which made him realise that the music resonated with the people. In 2021, Tarun released an album of plant music, featuring music made with hemlocks, blackberries, apple trees, Japanese maples and an adler from Fairy Creek, an old growth forest on Vancouver Island.

He often ventures into the forest, plugging into trees and the undergrowth to listen to their sounds; this he says is a constant inspiration. Tarun has experimented with flowers and fruits, too, such as hibiscus, rambutan, Bird of Paradise and even a pineapple.

Floral notes Tarun Nayar. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The concerts are not rehearsed, as the music takes place according to the natural vibrations of a place and its flora and funga.

In 2023, when he first visited India, for the Echoes of Earth festival in Bengaluru, he played music with a giant ficus tree. Tarun tried it again this year, attaching electrical cables to the tree and connecting it to the synths.

An Indian-origin Canadian, Tarun is a trained biologist. His formal training in Indian classical music since childhood and the tabla he learnt in Mumbai learnt the tabla in Mumbai. He has collaborated with artists, Diljit Dosanjh, for a track in his album Moonchild Era.

Tarun says he is delighted and constantly inspired by the constellation of musical impulses in the natural world.

"This world is so alive and I am just tuning in to listen to their music and approaching it as an artist. I hope experiments such as these will help people reconnect with Nature."

Karnataka govt. waives pending power bills of Mysugar factory

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The factory has not paid its electricity bills for the last 25 years. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The State government has waived electricity dues amounting to ₹52.25 crore of the State-owned Mysuru Sugar Company Ltd., also known as Mysugar, in Mandya district. The Cabinet meeting held in Belagavi last week took a decision in this regard.

On July 5, 2024, Dinesh Gooli Gowda, MLC, had made an appeal on this given its poor financial condition and enable the factory to crush sugarcane produced in the district.

The factory has not paid its electricity bills for the last 25 years and has an outstanding bill of ₹52.25 crore to be paid to Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Ltd.

The CESC also served notice to Mysugar GM that it would disconnect power supply to the factory if it did not clear the bill.

Appeal to Centre to cancel nod for mining tungsten

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

At a meeting of its general and executive councils on Sunday, the AIADMK criticised the DMK government on multiple fronts, including the alleged lack of preparation in tackling Cyclone Fengal, inadequate relief efforts, and the law and order situation.

It also urged the Centre to withdraw the permission for mining tungsten in Madurai district, provide funds to Tamil Nadu without discrimination, and shift the subject of education from the Concurrent List to the State List.

Despite the DMK government having urged the Centre to drop the proposal to mine tungsten, the AIADMK criticised it over the alleged delay of over 10 months in making efforts to stall the project.

The meeting, chaired by AIADMK presidium chairman A. Tamilmagan Hussain, adopted 16 resolutions, one of which criticised the Chief Minister M.K. Stalin-led DMK government over the alleged lack of arrangements to provide food and water to the people affected by the natural disaster.

Centre rubbing salt into State's wounds: Kerala FM

Balagopal flays Union government for demanding payment for disaster relief and rescue operations conducted by IAF after the 2018 floods and Wayanad landslides earlier this year

Press Trust of India
KOCHI

Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal on Sunday criticised the Union government for demanding payment for disaster relief and rescue operations conducted by the Indian Air Force (IAF) during the Wayanad landslides.

He described the move as rubbing salt into the wounds of the State, which is already burdened by the aftermath of the disaster.

Addressing presspersons here, Mr. Balagopal accused the BJP-ruled Union government of "failing" to provide even the funds it had promised to the State for disaster relief.

Making a case: Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and K.N. Balagopal, left, leave after addressing a press meet in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

He alleged that this was akin to mocking the people of the State.

Stance questioned

He also questioned the stance of BJP leaders, including Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi and former Union Minister V. Muraleedharan, on the issue.

Mr. Balagopal made these remarks in response to queries regarding a letter dated October 22, titled 'Settlement of Outstanding Airlift Charges,' received by the office of then-Chief Secretary V. Venu on November 2. It contained details of unpaid bills – over ₹100 crore for rescue operations during the 2018 floods and more than ₹13 crore for IAF operations after the July 30 landslides in Wayanad.

Meanwhile, BJP leader and former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar criticised the State government, accusing it of creating a row over the letter. According to his post on X, "Reimbursement of costs to @IAF_MCC for relief operations is routinely done by ALL State govts." "But for @pinarayivijayan's govt. that has a Budget of 2 Lac crs/year it bcms a "row" why?"

Four killed in Kerala after car hit bus with Sabarimala pilgrims from Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
PATHANAMTHITTA

Preliminary reports indicate that the driver of the car may have dozed off at the wheel

Four persons were killed in an accident involving a car and a bus carrying Sabarimala pilgrims near Konni in Kerala in the early hours of Sunday.

The dead have been identified as a couple, Nikhil and Anu, Mathai Eapen and Biju P. George, all residents of Mallassery near Pathanamthitta.

Nikhil's father, Mathai, and Anu's father, Biju, had received the couple at the Thiruvananthapuram airport as they returned from a vacation in Malaysia.

The police said the accident occurred around 3.30 a.m. on the Murinjakallu-Kalanjoor stretch of the Punalur-Muvattupuzha road. Preliminary investigation reports said Biju had dozed off at the wheel while returning to Pathanamthitta.

The car veered off its track and slammed into the bus carrying 19 pilgrims from Telangana. None of the bus passengers sustained serious injuries.

Local people rushed to the scene immediately after the accident and initiated rescue operations. A police and Fire and Rescue team joined in.

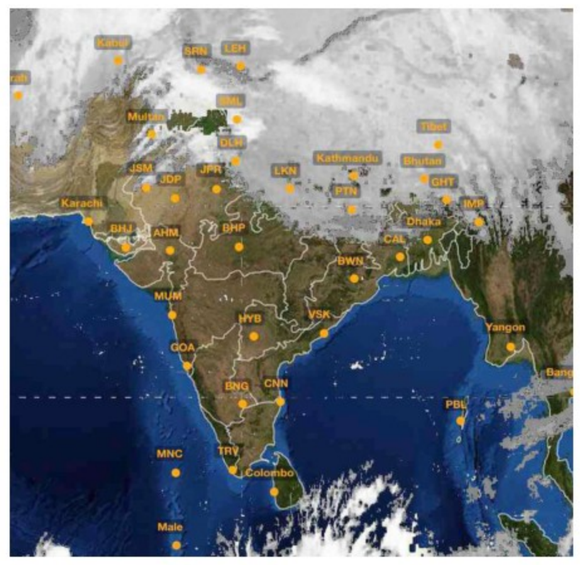
The car's passengers were extricated from the mangled vehicle and taken to the hospital.

Three of them were declared dead on arrival, while Anu died of injuries in hospital.

Residents in the area said the stretch of road where the accident occurred lacked width and had been the site of many accidents in recent years.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Dense fog likely in Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh. Cold wave conditions likely in Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Odisha, Maharashtra, Saurashtra and Telangana

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	26.2	10.5	Kozhikode	—	33.8	23.8
Ahmedabad	—	28.3	13.5	Kurnool			
Aizawl	—	23.2	7.9	Lucknow	—	25.2	5.5
Allahabad	—	24.6	6.6	Madurai	—	30.4	20.0
Bengaluru	—	26.6	16.6	Mangaluru	—	32.2	23.0
Bhopal	—	24.4	4.2	Mumbai	—	33.3	22.4
Bhubaneswar	—	28.0	13.0	Mysuru	—	28.0	19.0
Chandigarh	—	22.0	4.8	New Delhi		23.0	5.2
Chennai	—	30.1	23.9	Patna	—	23.2	10.2
Coimbatore	—	32.2	19.2	Port Blair	41	29.0	23.6
Dehradun	—	22.3	4.8	Puducherry	—	28.8	21.6
Gangtok	—	16.0	6.9	Pune	—	32.0	14.1
Goa	—	—	—	Raipur	—	27.3	12.1
Guwahati	—	26.0	12.0	Ranchi	—	21.5	7.6
Hubballi	—	30.0	15.0	Shillong	—	21.8	7.5
Hyderabad	—	28.6	13.0	Shimla	—	22.0	5.2
Imphal	—	23.0	7.9	Srinagar	—	7.1	-3.4
Jaipur	—	25.3	7.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.3	23.0
Kochi	â	30.8	23.0	Tiruchi	0.1	29.3	21.4
Kohima		15.8	6.2	Vijayawada	—	29.3	18.4
Kolkata	—	25.3	13.0	Visakhapatnam	—	28.4	21.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.20	..41	38	... 227	...122	
Bengaluru	.12	..32	32	..... —	74	
Chennai	.13	..11	.—	... 112	...105	
Delhi	.27	..85	83	... 376	...285	
Hyderabad	..—	..26	82	... 224	.....—	
Kolkata	.11	..31	26	... 170	...113	
Lucknow	...4	..37	48	... 312	...264	
Mumbai	.26	108	11	... 121	.....—	
Pune	..—	148	41	... 225	...129	
Visakhapatnam	...8	..46	46	... 198	...134	

Yesterday

High levels of particulate matter pollution recorded in most cities across the country. Going by Central Pollution Control Board data, Hajipur the worst with PM2.5 pollution levels touching a dangerous 341. Chandigarh was a close second with PM2.5 readings of 322.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Hemalatha M.
Biju Dharmapalan

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Fuel their passions

Passionpreneurship is the key to unlocking students' potential and reshaping the future of education

A common problem faced by youngsters today is the difficulty of getting a job in their domain of knowledge. The reason for this is not that there are not enough jobs in the market but the difficulty of finding a candidate who fulfils the needs of the job profile. This situation is primarily because of the lack of passion among youngsters. While passion is an important driver for success, it has never been a measured metric in our academic evaluation structures. The syllabus in our universities is mainly prepared by teachers based on convenience and workload. As a result, students are forced to learn what they don't wish to learn, and so do not acquire or focus on skills needed for a job profile in their knowledge domain. This is affecting the academic and industry ecosystem, and necessitates fixing yardsticks to measure and promote passion during academic life.

Passionpreneurship combines "passion" with "entrepreneurship," reflecting a pursuit of careers driven by personal values and interests rather than just market opportunities. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, which focuses on profit, passionpreneurship stems from an innate desire to work in fields that excite and fulfill individuals. This mindset can redefine academic success, encouraging students to harness their unique talents and align them with societal needs. Incorporating passionpreneurship into academic structures aligns well with the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), which promotes self-directed learning and problem-solving skills tailored to diverse career paths. The rise of social media and digital platforms has further facilitated this approach, making it easier for students to transform their hobbies into viable careers through digital tools and global connections.

Custom-made syllabi

Fostering passionpreneurship within academia is not about rejecting traditional learning. Instead, it enhances it by allowing students to explore unconventional paths that resonate with their passions. Soft skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and emotional intelligence are vital in this approach. Educators are now developing personalised learning plans, enabling students to tailor course content to match their entrepreneurial goals. A custom-made syllabus can encourage passionpreneurship in several ways:

Enhanced engagement: When students help shape their syllabus, they can include topics related to their interests, leading to increased engagement and deeper investment in their passions.

Cross-disciplinary knowledge: Custom syllabus allow students to incorporate diverse subjects, supporting interdisciplinary learning. For example, a student interested in health technology might integrate Biology, Software Development, and Business Studies to create a niche in health tech.

Syllabus customisation: Tailoring the syllabus enables students to focus on the skills they need for their entrepreneurial goals, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

Problem-solving focus: By designing curricula around real-world problems, students develop a problem-solving mindset. Students interested in sustainability, for instance, could focus on Environmental Studies and green innovation, equipping themselves to launch eco-conscious ventures.

Mentorship and networking: A custom syllabus allows students to connect with mentors and professionals aligned with their passions, providing essential insights and industry connections.

Creative exploration: Custom syllabi encourage students to explore unconventional or emerging topics, fostering creativity and innovation. This helps students generate unique entrepreneurial ideas.

Tailored assessments: Personalised assessments such as portfolios or business models reflect students' entrepreneurial goals, offering a platform to showcase their skills and build confidence in their ventures.

Thus a custom-made syllabus gives students control over their educational journey and provides a structured way to pursue, experiment with, and refine their passions into viable, fulfilling careers. As passionpreneurship continues to gain traction, the role of academic institutions will evolve. Universities and colleges that succeed in the future will embrace this shift, providing students with the tools and opportunities required to pursue their passions and make a meaningful impact. Academic success will no longer be measured solely by degrees or exam results but by the ability of institutions to cultivate innovative thinkers and socially conscious entrepreneurs.

As more institutions adopt this mindset, we can expect to see a generation of students who are not only well-educated but also deeply engaged with their passions, ready to innovate and make meaningful contributions to society. The fusion of passion and entrepreneurship is the key to unlocking students' potential and reshaping the future of education.

Hemalatha M. is an Assistant Professor at the School of Commerce an Management, Garden City University, Bengaluru. Biju Dharmapalan is the Dean-Academic affairs, Garden City University, and adjunct faculty at NIAS, Bengaluru.

Fortune IAS Academy, in collaboration with The Hindu EducationPlus, presents a webinar on UPSC Interview: Tips from Experts. Speakers are D. P. Agrawal, Former Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC); P.K. Sidharth Ramkumar, AIR 4 in the 2024 UPSC CSE and IAS Officer Trainee; and Kiran P. B., IPS Officer and National Interview Topper of 2022. The webinar will be moderated by Soma Basu, Sr. Deputy Editor, The Hindu.

When: December 22, 2024, at 10:30 AM,

Register at https://newsth.live/FIASE or scan the QR code.

Permissive no more

The Supreme Court must put an end to violations of the Places of Worship Act

The Supreme Court's interim order halting the registration of fresh suits across the country regarding disputes of places of worship is a welcome departure from the permissive approach of the judiciary in recent times towards such motivated litigation. A Division Bench, headed by the Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, has done well to stop the flow of litigation and interim orders, including those that allow 'surveys' of such sites and structures, while it deals with the challenges to the validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. The order signifies a deep understanding that this is not about a set of civil disputes but the future of the country's secular character. It is amply clear to right-thinking citizens that the law, which freezes the religious character of all places of worship in the country as they were on the day of Independence, would want this legislation to remain on the statute book as a bulwark against elements that want to perpetuate the religious divide caused by such disputes. It is unfortunate, and even condemnable, that courts of law have failed to block these suits at a nascent stage by invoking the bar under this law. Instead, they have been allowing applications for surveys, either disregarding the Act and the Court's endorsement of its necessity in past judgments or ruling that the statutory bar does not apply to them.

In the name of reclaiming religious sites lost to invaders, several groups and purported devotees have been moving civil courts and obtaining questionable orders for surveying mosques for evidence that they may have been built on the ruins of destroyed temples. The success of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement was largely due to the political patronage enjoyed by its spearheads, and a final verdict from the Court, which handed over the disputed land to the Hindu litigants while condemning the demolition of the Babri Masjid mosque in December 1992. That the vandals involved in the demolition were acquitted, without any further appeal, added to the triumphalism that marks this movement for altering the status of mosques. This has given rise to further claims in Varanasi, Mathura, and, more recently, Sambhal, among other places that house mosques dating back to the 16th century. A notable feature of this permissive judicial attitude is the complete absence of any understanding of the history of the temple movement that was largely political in character. That judges could entertain obviously baleful and ill-motivated cases is a great cause of concern for those rightfully invested in the secular nature of the country. The criminal imprint on the nation's fabric left by political movements in a religious garb should not be forgotten.

Warding off fire

There should be no slackening in fire safety norms in hospitals

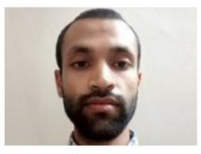
There is no greater betrayal than when a sanctuary turns into a death trap. Fire accidents in hospitals that kill the vulnerable would fall squarely in this category. A massive fire that broke out at City Hospital, an orthopaedic specialty unit in Dindigul in south Tamil Nadu, last week caused the death of six people, including a child and two women. All the victims were trapped in the hospital lift and initial reports suggested they died of suffocation. Only one of the six persons, who was on a wheelchair, was an inpatient at the hospital; all the others were visitors. They were trapped, over half an hour, in the lift as the smoke poured in through the vents, all escape routes sealed. The fire, which reportedly started as a short circuit in the ground floor, swept up to the first floor, and smoke soon curled up to all the floors in the four-storey building, affecting patients. Initially, smoke was noticed in the outpatient department, after patient files caught fire. In response, the power supply was shut down, but six persons still entered the lift at the ground floor. In the melee that ensued, no one paid any attention to the lift, stuck in between two floors. Meanwhile, patients on the higher floors struggled to breathe, but for many, because of mobility issues, there was no opportunity to escape. Thirty-two patients were shifted to the nearby Dindigul government hospital for further treatment and three of them needed ventilator support.

The rash of fire accidents in hospitals in India, in recent times, and the lives lost are uncanny reminders that hospital infrastructure upkeep, in the private or public health-care sector, is astonishingly low priority across the country. One month ago, on November 15, 10 newborns died in a fire in Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College and Hospital, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. In May this year, seven newborns were killed in New Born Baby Care Hospital, a private facility in East Delhi, after a fire broke out there. It is unconscionable that, as a nation, India pays little attention to fireproofing its hospitals, making sure all equipment in hospitals and the hospitals themselves are ready to act and limit damage if, and when, a mechanical fault was to cause a fire. The government should ensure that periodic renewal of fire licences stops being a travesty. Existing government fire safety regulations must be followed implicitly and spiritedly, without any slacking, with respect to hospitals and public places. If a hospital ever gets into the news, it must be for its healing prowess, not for being a towering inferno.

Let's talk about 'one candidate, multiple constituencies'

Santosh Kumar Dash

an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), Anand, Gujarat



Santosh Kumar Panda

a PhD scholar in political science at the University of Hyderabad

Ever since the panel for 'One Nation One Election' led by the former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, recommended simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, much has been written on its positive and negative aspects, the practical considerations and of course the politics around the subject. Amidst all the political accusations and counter-accusations, another important issue has gone missing from attention. The matter is about one candidate contesting from multiple constituencies (OCMC) for the same office.

The background, the challenges

The Constitution of India provides for regular elections every five years to the Legislative Assembly and the lower House of Parliament. However, the Constitution, other than providing for the Election Commission of India (ECI), has empowered Parliament to regulate the manner of conducting the elections. Therefore, 'contesting from multiple constituencies' has been dealt with in the Representation of the People Act 1951. Under the Act, there was no limit on the number of constituencies a candidate could contest – until 1996. This resulted in candidates contesting from multiple constituencies, sometimes more than two, winning them and vacating all but one seat, in accordance with Section 70 of the same Act. This necessitated by-elections frequently.

Due to this, Parliament amended the Act in 1996 to limit the number of constituencies that a candidate can contest from, to two. The amendment intended to discourage one candidate from contesting from multiple constituencies. Despite this, the practice has continued. The numbers are even more frequent in State Legislative Assembly elections, leading to frequent by-elections – there were 44 by-elections for State Assemblies in November 2024 due to the resignation of sitting legislators.

Frequent by-elections due to candidates winning from multiple constituencies pose several challenges. First, they add to taxpayer costs. The administrative cost of the Lok Sabha elections is borne by the central government, and Legislative Assemblies by the State governments; in the 2014 general election, it amounted to ₹3,870 crore. Adjusted for 6% annual inflation, the 2024 general election is put at a cost of ₹6,931 crore, or ₹12.76 crore per seat. If 10 politicians win from two constituencies, the extra cost of holding a by-election would be around ₹130 crore. While this is relatively small when compared to overall election spending, the real issue lies in the massive expenditure by political parties, estimated at ₹1,35,000 crore for the recent general election, or about ₹250 crore per constituency, according to the estimates by the Centre for Media Studies. This burden ultimately falls on the public, and much of the funding comes from black money, which undermines financial transparency.

Second, the by-election necessitated by the vacation of a winning candidate within an initial six months tends to favour the ruling party. This is borne out in by-election trends across multiple States. This emanates from the fact the ruling party can mobilise resources and provide patronage to party workers. Such a scenario of a non-level playing field is skewed against the Opposition, which has negative implications for parliamentary democracy.

Third, the financial burden of organising a by-election disproportionately falls on the already defeated candidate and their party, forcing them to spend resources once again.

Fourth, the saying "Democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people" suggests that elections should serve people's needs. However, a candidate contesting from multiple seats serves as a hedging mechanism against uncertainties and often prioritises the leader's interests, not the people's. This undermines democratic principles, placing politics above the public.

Fifth, OCMC is sometimes used to enhance the reach and message delivery of the leader, relying on their popularity for electoral success. This often reflects the leader's dominance within the party, particularly in family- or leader-centric parties. Moreover, OCMC goes against the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression of citizens. A petition filed in 2023 (*Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay vs Union of India*) argued that when people elect a representative, they trust that person to be their voice. Contesting multiple constituencies, winning them, and vacating one for a by-election violates Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. This practice causes voter confusion and discontent, as seen in Wayanad, Kerala, when Rahul Gandhi vacated his seat in 2024, potentially leading to voter apathy. The voter turnout was 64.24% in the bypoll and 72.92% in the general election.

Some advantages

The OCMC is common in many countries. It may also have some practical considerations. First, contesting multiple seats provides a safety net for candidates, especially in tightly contested constituencies. Second, in a polity such as India, where politics is centered around the leader and family, OCMC smoothens the leader's continuation or transition in case a leader-centric party secures a majority in the elections but the leader of the party loses out. For instance, Mamata Banerjee lost the Nandigram seat in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections. To make way for her, another leader elected from the Bhabanipur constituency had to resign from the Assembly. Similar things unfolded in the case of Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand in the 2022 Assembly elections.

International experience

OCMC is not unique to India. Pakistan and Bangladesh allow candidates to contest multiple constituencies but require them to relinquish all but one seat. Pakistan places no limit on the number of constituencies a candidate can contest, as seen in the 2018 elections when the former Prime Minister contested five seats and vacated four. Similarly, Bangladesh allowed candidates to contest up to five constituencies until 2008 but now limits it to three. The practice was once common in the United Kingdom but has been banned since 1983. Most European democracies have phased it out to promote clear representation and accountability.

The misuse of the OCMC far outweighs the benefits. There have been demands for reforms, and probable solutions may be considered. First, amend Section 33(7) of the RP Act 1951 to ban one candidate contesting from multiple constituencies for the same office. The ECI, in 2004, recommended the government ban the practice. The 255th Law Commission report in 2015 made the same recommendation.

Second, recovering the full cost of by-elections from the candidate vacating a seat can serve to discourage candidates from contesting simultaneously. The ECI recommended cost imposition on candidates contesting from multiple constituencies in 2004. However, the practice of OCMC will continue as the winning candidate or political party can afford to pay the cost. Third, a more effective deterrent would be to hold the by-elections after a year, allowing voters ample time to make an informed decision and giving the defeated candidate sufficient time to recover and prepare strategically for another contest. This would also provide a more balanced and fair electoral process. This could be done by amending Section 151A, Representation of Peoples Act 1951 which provides for by-election within six months of the occurrence of vacancy.

Holding elections requires substantial financial resources from the state. Furthermore, with elections being a round-the-year affair in India, the frequent need for by-elections takes time and money – resources that could otherwise be better invested in the country's development. However, as the issue of OCOC (one candidate, one constituency) is political, it requires political willpower and the support of the major parties to bring about change. However, unlike the One Nation One Election, it does not have many proponents in political parties. If "one person, one vote" is the core democratic principle for voters, it is time to enforce "one candidate, one constituency" for candidates.

If 'one person, one vote' is the core democratic principle for voters, it should be 'one candidate, one constituency' for politicians

India's firmer attempts at mineral diplomacy

Abhishek Sharma

a Research Assistant with the Observer Research Foundation's Strategic Studies Programme

As India seeks to expand its manufacturing and technological capability, critical minerals will become vital to fulfil this ambition. However, India, a major critical mineral importer, still depends on other countries, primarily China, for its mineral security, which has become a cause of strategic concern. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who voiced India's apprehensions at a defence think tank gathering, said, "While [the] scramble for resources for economic reasons has had a long history, their weaponisation by some nations for strategic reasons is a comparatively new phenomenon", hinting at Chinese attempts. To address India's mineral security challenge, which is aimed at reducing its strategic vulnerability, New Delhi has started an attempt to engage in mineral diplomacy.

Establishing joint ventures

This attempt is based on the pillars of: developing international engagement with mineral-producing countries, and establishing strategic partnerships with intergovernmental organisations. The first pillar focuses on building bilateral ties with resource-rich countries such as Australia, Argentina, the United States, Russia, and Kazakhstan to secure the supply of lithium and cobalt. To facilitate this vision, post-2019, India established the Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), a joint venture company with a mandate "to ensure a consistent supply of critical and strategic minerals to the Indian domestic market". The objective was to achieve mineral security by securing agreements, and acquisitions through government-to-government, government-to-business, and business-to-business routes.

In March 2022, KABIL signed a Memorandum of understanding with Australia for a critical mineral investment partnership, identifying two lithium and three cobalt projects. Latin America's Lithium Triangle, which constitutes Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, has also attracted India's attention. In January 2024, India signed a $24 million lithium exploration pact with a state-owned enterprise in Argentina for five lithium brine blocks. KABIL is also actively working to secure mineral supplies by facilitating the buying of assets from Bolivia and Chile. Apart from the government, India's private sector has also benefited. Altmin Private Limited signed an agreement with YLB, Bolivia's national company, to secure the raw material supply chain of Li-ion batteries.

Central Asia has also caught India's attention. Recently, India and Kazakhstan formed a joint venture, IREUK Titanium Limited, to produce titanium slag in India. This was one of India's first joint ventures with the Central Asian Republics. This attempt is aligned with New Delhi's proposal to establish an India-Central Asia Rare Earths Forum to leverage the region's rich resources.

Cooperative engagements

The second pillar of mineral diplomacy is international engagement, which is forging and strengthening partnerships with minilateral and multilateral initiatives related to mineral security, such as the Quad (Australia, Japan, India, the United States), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), Mineral Security Partnership (MSP) and the G-7, for cooperation in the critical mineral supply chain. These cooperative engagements aim to align India with the global best practices in the critical mineral sector across its three segments – upstream, midstream, and downstream.

Additionally, they also facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building, which is important for coordinating with international partners such as the U.S., the European Union (EU), South Korea, and Australia.

To further this collaboration with western partners, India's Ministry of Mines signed a MoU with the International Energy Agency to strengthen cooperation on critical minerals, helping India to "streamline its policies, regulations, and investment strategies in the critical mineral sector, aligning them with global standards and best practices".

The missing pieces

India's attempt at mineral diplomacy has led to many positive outcomes, but still lacks three essential ingredients required for its international diplomatic engagement. These are: a lack of private sector participation; weak diplomatic capacity, and insufficient sustainable partnership. Also, India's private sector has largely been missing from the equation.

The absence of a critical mineral supply chain strategy and a clear road map for the private sector are two primary variables responsible for the lack of policy clarity, leading to their absenteeism. To address these, India needs to formulate a comprehensive approach for de-risking, considering the role of the private sector across the supply chain. An important step would be to have a supply chain strategy based on India's growth prospects and national security priorities.

Second, India must strengthen its mineral diplomacy engagement. Having a dedicated mineral diplomacy division within the Ministry of External Affairs, similar to the New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST) division and a special position for mineral diplomacy in selected diplomatic missions can be the first step.

Third, India's goal towards mineral security necessitates that New Delhi forge strategic, sustainable, and trusted partnerships with bilateral partners and multilateral forums. Among all its partners, working with EU, South Korea, and the other Quad members is critical to India's mineral security due to its domestic capabilities, diplomatic network and technological know-how. If these issues can be resolved, India's attempts at mineral diplomacy will gain strength and will be able to better complement New Delhi's domestic critical mineral initiatives, which are currently moving at a slow pace.

The moves are to reduce India's strategic vulnerability, but there are issues that need to be resolved

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The two-day debate

The debate in Parliament on the Constitution went exactly as expected. The Opposition criticised the ruling party for its actions, while the ruling party repeated its accusations about the Emergency. It would have been unrealistic to expect this debate to result in any real solutions (Page 1, December 15). Instead of committing to working together to improve the Constitution, both sides across the political aisle seem to have dug in their heels even more. We can celebrate the Constitution's 75th anniversary all we want, but it will not mean much unless we truly live by its values. As someone who has lived through 70 years of Indian politics, I have come to believe that leaders who are known for dishonesty and corruption have no right to speak about the Constitution's values. Democracy depends on open-mindedness and constructive dialogue, but it seems like we are seeing less and less of this of late.

V. Nagarajan,
Chennai

It is astonishing that the Prime Minister spent most of the time in Parliament castigating the Congress Party and its leaders. Development by any government is a continuous process, depending on what they feel is a priority, the needs of the people and the revenue available to fulfil these needs.

A lot of emphasis was given to the Emergency of 1975. Aren't we being subjected now to what is termed as an 'undeclared Emergency'? The Opposition's motion of their 'no confidence' against the Chairman of the Upper House is an indicator of the abyss that our system has fallen into.

Hemachandra Basappa,
Bengaluru

Corrections & Clarifications

In the Editorial, "A legend, made" (December 13, 2024), a sentence in the first paragraph should have read: "Gukesh won Game 3 to tie the match...."

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

The digital frontier of inequality

Susan Jane Ferguson
Country Representative for UN Women in India

Shombi Sharp
UN Resident Coordinator for India

Both authors are part of Team UN in India

India stands at a pivotal moment in its digital revolution, underpinned by an internationally recognised model of digital public infrastructure. Today, India has 1.18 billion mobile connections, 700 million Internet users, and 600 million smartphones.

While the narrowing of the digital gender divide is a sign of progress, as in many countries, a surge in gender-based violence (GBV), particularly tech-facilitated GBV, threatens to overshadow gains. In response, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development recently launched 'Ab Koi Bahana Nahi (no more excuses)', a national campaign aligned with the global '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence'. This annual campaign is led by UN Women.

The risks

India's digital transformation has unlocked immense opportunities for empowerment. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana has increased account coverage almost four-fold since 2015, with women holding 55.6% of the accounts. Digital Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-mobile linkages enable direct benefits and cashless transactions, especially in rural areas. However, this increased connectivity has also exposed women to new risks.

In urban areas, online harassment is rampant, particularly targeting women in public-facing roles such as journalists and politicians. Rural India boasts 20% more Internet users than in urban areas (2021 Nielsen report). Already constrained by societal norms, many women and girls lack the digital literacy and skills to navigate online spaces safely. Compounding the issue, many women are also unaware of their rights or the mechanisms available to them for reporting abuse.

TFGBV takes many harmful forms. These include persistent harassment such as cyberstalking, online trolling, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Impersonation and fraud through fake profiles, voyeurism, and grooming further exploit vulnerable individuals. These often force women and girls to retreat from digital spaces.

India has taken important steps to combat TFGBV. Legal protections, including the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2024, provide a strong foundation to address digital violence. Mechanisms such as the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal enable anonymous reporting, while the government-led Information Security Education and Awareness Programme spreads digital safety awareness. Women-specific programmes, such as Digital Shakti, launched by the National Commission for Women, equip women with tools to navigate online spaces securely. These measures mark great progress in creating safer digital spaces, though some gaps remain.

India also actively engages in international negotiations and agreements, including the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women where UN member states, including India, signed off on agreed conclusions that called for "adequate safeguards in order to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible and affordable information and communications technology environment for all women and girls". This underscores India's commitment to tackling TFGBV.

The way forward

Achieving truly safe digital environments for women and girls requires more focused and strategic efforts that can keep pace with this changing and evolving digital world.

The Global Digital Compact, adopted by world leaders including India, at the UN Summit of the Future earlier this year, further strengthens legal and policy frameworks "to counter and eliminate all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology". Therefore, combating TFGBV must be a top priority. This includes enforcing stricter laws against perpetrators of online violence, and swifter justice for survivors. Holding social media platforms accountable is an important part of the tool kit to reduce TFGBV.

Expanding digital literacy programmes, particularly in rural areas, is critical. Integrating safe online practices into school curriculums and conducting community workshops for women and men, young and old, can be empowering. Additionally, nationwide campaigns that challenge societal norms and actively engage men and boys as allies can foster respectful and inclusive digital spaces.

Collaboration with India's vibrant tech industry is essential. While many platforms have introduced safety features, these need further enhancement to proactively address online abuse. Leveraging artificial intelligence to detect and remove abusive content, yet retaining human oversight, alongside introducing user-friendly reporting mechanisms, can improve safety.

Just as important is the development of robust survivor support systems that offer accessible counselling, legal aid, and rehabilitation services. Expanding the capacity of helplines and initiatives such as TechSakhi, a helpline offering accurate information, empathetic support, and assistance, will ensure that survivors receive timely and effective assistance.

As we concluded observing the 16-Days of Activism that ends on International Human Rights Day every year, India's timely message is unequivocal: *Ab Koi Bahana Nahi*. Ensuring women's safety online is not only a moral obligation but also a critical pillar for India's progress.

Governments, tech companies, civil society groups, individuals, and international organisations have a role to play, and we in the UN Country Team are proud to be a partner in this journey.

Ensuring women's safety online is not only a moral obligation but also a critical pillar for India's progress

A minefield of controversies

Yet another political row has erupted, this time over tungsten mining

STATE OF PLAY

S. Ganesan
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The Union government's move to grant tungsten mining rights to Hindustan Zinc Limited, a Vedanta Group company, near a biodiversity heritage site in Madurai has kicked up a political row in Tamil Nadu.

The controversy erupted last month after the Union Ministry of Mines declared Hindustan Zinc as the preferred bidder of the Nayakkarpatti block, which is rich in scheelite, a primary ore of tungsten. The Nayakkarpatti block comprises six villages. One of them is Arittapatti, a notified biodiversity heritage site famous for archaeological monuments, including cave temples, sculptures, Jain symbols, Tamil Brahmi scripts, and Pancha Pandavar stone beds.

Environmental activists and villagers took to the streets saying mining will not only ruin the terrain but also agriculture and their livelihoods. More than 20 panchayats of four panchayat unions in Madurai unanimously passed resolutions opposing the proposed mining.

The auction has pitted the ruling DMK and its allies against the Centre on the one hand and against the Opposition parties in the State on the other. While the DMK government says it was not consulted, the Centre claims inputs were taken from it before the auction and that no objection was raised then. The Opposition was quick to accuse the DMK of 'duplicity.' But the DMK maintains that it was only the Centre and not the State that cleared the mining project and has accused the Opposition of spreading disinformation. Although the Union government has allowed Vedanta to mine in an area of 2015.51 hectares, the State has not given permission, the government said.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking cancellation of the mining rights awarded to the company. He said mining will cause irreparable damage to the heritage site. "In addition, commercial mining in such densely populated villages will definitely affect the people. This has caused immense anguish among the people, who fear that their livelihood may be lost forever," he wrote.

The Chief Minister said that the Tamil Nadu government in October 2023 had raised concerns about the auctioning of mining rights of critical and strategic minerals, but the Union Minister for Coal and Mines had rejected them, arguing that the auction cannot be withheld, in the larger interests of the country.

Last week, the State Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a special resolution demanding revocation of the award of mining rights. During the debate, Opposition leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami accused the DMK government of being inactive for the 10 months since the Union government brought amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act, 1957, with regard to the mining of critical and strategic minerals. Mr. Stalin argued that the DMK government did oppose the amendment. He added that he will not permit the mining as long as he is Chief Minister. Not to be outdone, the State BJP president, K. Annamalai, met Union Minister for Coal and Mines, seeking to call a halt to the project.

Tamil Nadu is no stranger to such controversies. In the last two decades, there has been intense opposition to various projects and striking a balance in the face of it seems to be increasingly difficult for governments in the State. In the last two decades, there has been intense opposition to various projects in Tamil Nadu. In 2010, farmers staged protests in the Cauvery delta region after the United Progressive Alliance government granted permission to the Great Eastern Energy Corporation Limited (GEECL) to explore coal bed methane in the Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts. An MoU was signed by the GEECL and the DMK-led State government in 2011. In July 2013, in response to sustained protests, the then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa suspended the project and followed it up with a ban in 2015.

In 2017, there were protests at Neduvasal in Pudukottai and Kadiramangalam in Thanjavur against hydrocarbon exploration in the delta. Later, when contracts were awarded to Vedanta and ONGC under the Open Acreage Licensing Programme Bid Round-I for hydrocarbon exploration in the Cauvery basin, protests broke out again. In 2020, the Cauvery delta was declared a protected agricultural zone.

In 2014, complaints about air and water pollution by the Vedanta Group's copper smelting plant at Thoothukudi led to the closure of the unit. In May that year, 13 people were killed when the police opened fire to quell protests.

Over 78% of top paid H-1B applicants were from India

Many of them were sponsored by relatively smaller U.S. companies

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In the last four years, more than 78% of the top paid H-1B applicants (whose proposed wage rate exceeded $1 million per year) were from India. Among the Indians whose wage rate exceeded $1 million per year, over 25% were women. Also, over 65% of these high-paid H-1B applicants from India were sponsored by relatively smaller companies in the U.S.

Moreover, the salary range of H-1B applicants whose sponsors were U.S.-based companies was in general higher than the salary range of H-1B applicants whose sponsors were India-based companies. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

These conclusions are based on data obtained by Bloomberg from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Each April, the USCIS conducts a random lottery to determine which H-1B applicants can proceed to submit visa petitions. Candidates may have multiple registrations submitted by different employers. Once selected, an employer can file an H-1B petition on behalf of the beneficiary. These petitions include details about the proposed job, such as salary and location, and form the basis of the conclusions presented in the story. Only about 1 lakh approved H-1B petitions, filed in the 2021-2024 period, for which all relevant data were available, were taken for the analysis.

While an approved H-1B petition is necessary for obtaining an H-1B visa, it does not guarantee one. After receiving approval from the USCIS, applicants may either apply for an H-1B visa at a U.S. consulate abroad or seek an Adjustment of Status with the USCIS if they are already in the U.S.

Chart 1 shows the proposed yearly wage rate in $ (vertical axis) against the number of workers employed by the sponsor in the U.S. (horizontal axis). Each circle corresponds to an applicant whose application got selected in the lottery and whose H-1B petition was approved. The higher the circle, the higher the proposed salary. The farther to the right, the bigger the company size of the sponsor. Indian applicants are highlighted in a different colour.

Of the 1 lakh H-1B applications, only 123 had a proposed salary of $1 million and above per year. Of them, 96 (78%) were from India. Over 90% of the proposed salaries were in and around the $1,00,000 range.

Chart 2 shows the same information, but only for Indians. Here, female and male applicants are differentiated using colours. Of the 96 applicants from India identified in Chart 1, 25 (26%) were women.

As can be seen in both charts, most of the applications with a higher pay – circles on the top – are crowded towards the left of the chart, pointing to the low employee count for those sponsors. Sixty-three of the 96 applicants identified in Chart 1 were sponsored by U.S. companies which had fewer than 1,000 employees in the U.S. In other words, bigger companies – both U.S.-based and India-based – did not sponsor many high-paid H1B applicants. Most of their applicants' proposed salaries were in the lower range, with very few exceptions.

Chart 3 shows the proposed yearly wage rate in $ for H-1B applicants of well-known sponsors (big-sized firms), in the 2021-2024 period. It ignores outlier salaries to find the usual salary range proposed for most applicants. The proposed salary range of U.S.-based employers such as Apple and Google were considerably higher than the proposed salary range of Indian-based companies such as Infosys and TCS.

Indians on top

The data for the charts were sourced by the Bloomberg News from the Department of Homeland Security under the Freedom of Information Act

Chart 1: The proposed yearly wage rate in $ (vertical axis) against the number of workers employed by the sponsor in the U.S. (horizontal axis). Each circle corresponds to an applicant whose application got selected in the lottery and whose H-1B petition was approved. The higher the circle, the higher the proposed salary. The farther to the right, the bigger the company size of the sponsor. ● Indians ● Other applicants

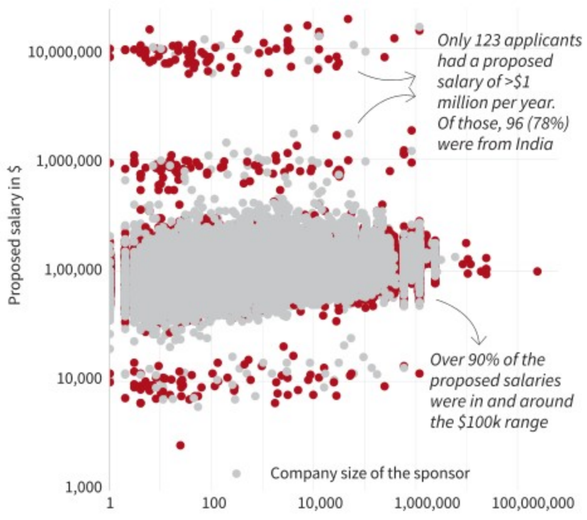
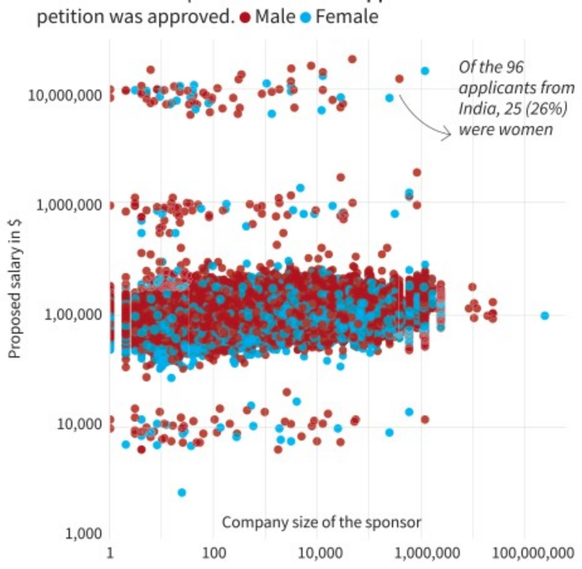


Chart 2: Proposed yearly wage rate in $ (vertical axis) against the number of workers employed by the sponsor in the U.S. Each circle corresponds to **an Indian applicant** whose H-1B petition was approved. ● Male ● Female



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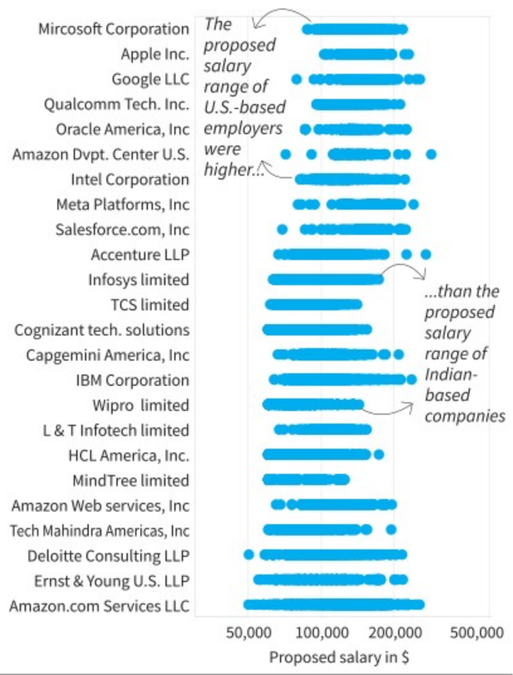

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 16, 1974

Electoral rolls revision may be over by June 1975

New Delhi, Dec. 15: A country-wide revision of electoral rolls is now in different stages of progress. It is likely that this work will be completed by June 1975.

Simultaneously the new delimitation of constituencies is also being undertaken and at least in one State, namely Gujarat, this has been completed and the final order of the Commission has been published. The work regarding revision of electoral rolls in Gujarat is likely to be completed in the first week of January next. This means that Gujarat would be ready to go to the polls at any convenient date after this is done. When exactly President's Rule in Gujarat will be terminated is a political decision though reports have it that complete normalcy prevails now and holding of an election to the State Assembly will not pose a law and order problem.

Revision of electoral rolls in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Bihar will commence in January and the likely date of final publication of electoral rolls is June 30 next. So far as Haryana is concerned, revision work commenced on November 1 in respect of some constituencies while in regard to the remaining Assembly constituencies, work began on December 2. By June 1975, the final rolls would have been published. In Himachal Pradesh revision of electoral rolls in respect of snow-bound areas will begin only in May next.

Enquiries with the Election Commission have also shown that so far as Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Punjab and Nagaland are concerned, the revision will be completed by June next.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 16, 1924

Women magistrates for Madras city

The Fort St. George Gazette notifies as follows: The Governor in Council is pleased to appoint the undermentioned persons to be Honorary Presidency Magistrates for the City of Madras and to empower them to sit on the Benches constituted for that city: Srimati Mangalammal (Lady Sadasiva Ayyar), Srimati V. Bhamini Bayi; Mrs. V. Panduranga Rao, and Mrs. Maud Hume Stanford.

From Page One

Simultaneous polls Bill not to come up today

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will also move two Appropriation Bills along with the Supplementary Grants.

Another Bill listed for Monday is the Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024. Mr. Meghwal will move the Bill. The Bill enables reservation of seats in accordance with Article 332 of the Constitution for "effective democratic participation of members of Scheduled Tribes and to provide for the readjustment of seats" in the Goa Assembly.

Kharge invited for talks

In the Rajya Sabha, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has invited Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge for another round of discussions to end the impasse. The Opposition has moved a no-confidence motion against Mr. Dhankhar alleging that he is chairing the proceedings in a partisan manner. The House did not transact major business last week as the BJP members protested against the alleged links of the Congress with U.S. billionaire George Soros.

The Upper House has listed a debate on the "Glorious Journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India" for Monday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is likely to speak on the matter then.

In Odisha, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has decided not to support the no-confidence motion proposed by the INDIA bloc against Mr. Dhankhar.

BJD Rajya Sabha member Niranjan Bisi said the regional party was not consulted by the INDIA bloc regarding the motion and, therefore, would abstain from the process.

Former Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik had recently emphasised that the party would take appropriate steps only after assessing the situation.

(With inputs from The Hindu bureau in Bhubaneswar)

AAP names candidates, Kejriwal for New Delhi

Ramesh Pehlwan, who joined the AAP from the BJP on Sunday, is the AAP candidate from Kasturba Nagar, replacing sitting MLA Madan Lal. Taking to X after the release of the list, Mr. Kejriwal said that the party is contesting the election with full confidence and preparation and took a dig at the BJP.

"The BJP is missing in action. They lack a CM face, team, planning or vision for Delhi. They only have one slogan, one policy and one mission - 'Remove Kejriwal'. Ask them what they did in five years for Delhi, and they reply: '*Kejriwal ko bahub gaali di*'' [We cursed Kejriwal a lot]," he posted. He added that his party has a vision and a plan for the development of Delhiites and a good team of educated people to implement it. "There is a long list of work we have undertaken in the last 10 years. The people of Delhi will vote for those who work, not those who abuse," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said the BJP will release its list of candidates in due course and that the time has come for the AAP to face the public and learn a lesson.

"Arvind Kejriwal's claim of having development, vision, and a capable team is completely absurd. In the last 10 years, Mr. Kejriwal's shallow vision and team have turned Delhi into the most polluted capital in the world. The Yamuna River resembles a drain than a river," he said.

Mr. Sachdeva added that the "visionary" work includes the construction of Mr. Kejriwal's extravagant "Sheesh Mahal" bungalow and the liquor scam, which now defines his party and government.

The Congress has released a list of 21 candidates for the election scheduled in February.

The AAP released its first list in November, which included the names of six leaders inducted from the BJP and the Congress, while dropping three sitting MLAs. The second list of 20 candidates featured a mix of old and new faces.

Committed to eliminating Naxalism in Chhattisgarh by 2026, says Amit Shah

Union Home Minister lauds the State govt. and Chhattisgarh Police's efforts in the past year in the fight against Naxalism, urges Naxals to join the mainstream and contribute to nation-building

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that a change in government in Chhattisgarh had provided momentum to the war against Naxalism, even as he reiterated that the insurgency would be completely eradicated by 2026.

Addressing the President's Police Colour Award function at the Police Parade Ground here, he lauded the State government's efforts as well as the achievements of the security forces in the past one year, even as he provided a slew of statistics to highlight some of these breakthroughs.

"The Chhattisgarh Police have secured a significant achievement in the fight against Naxalism in the past one year... 287 Naxalites were neutralised, around 1,000 were arrested and 837 surrendered in the past one year in the State, which reflects the momentum added to the fight against Naxalism. Fourteen top cadres (of Naxalites) were neutralised in the past one year in the State," he said.

Lauding efforts: Amit Shah during the presentation of President's Colour to the Chhattisgarh Police in Raipur on Sunday. PTI

> The Chhattisgarh Police have secured significant achievement in the fight against Naxalism
>
> **AMIT SHAH**
> Home Minister

"The State leadership, the Chief Minister, the Home Minister of the State have taken a pledge and the Government of India is also committed to your pledge. Together, we will completely eradicate Naxalism from Chhattisgarh before March 31, 2026. We all are committed to free Chhattisgarh from the clutches of Naxalism before March 31, 2026," the Home Minister had earlier said.

On the significance of the event and the President's insignia being bestowed upon the Chhattisgarh Police, Mr. Shah pointed out how the force receiving it in less than 25 years was a departure from the usual trend. He said that in 1951, the first President's Police Colour was awarded to the Navy and a minimum of 25 years of service was required to be eligible for this award. "Chhattisgarh, which was formed on November 1, 2000, has received this award before the completion of its 25 years. I would like to thank the President for honouring Chhattisgarh police's dedication, sacrifice and courage," he said.

'Best surrender policy'

At the Raipur event, and later at the closing ceremony of the Bastar Olympics 2024 in Jagdalpur, Mr. Shah urged remaining Naxals to lay down arms, join the mainstream, and contribute to nation-building. He said Chhattisgarh's surrender policy was the most attractive in the country.

At the Bastar event, he also interacted with former Naxals who had surrendered, and heard their stories of reintegration into society.

Dissanayake holds 'fruitful' talks with Jaishankar, Doval

Face to face: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Sunday held "fruitful" discussions with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, shortly after kick-starting a three-day visit to India.

It is Mr. Dissanayake's first foreign trip after assuming charge as the President. He will hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday that is expected to focus on boosting bilateral engagement in areas of trade, investment, energy and maritime security.

In his separate discussions with Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Doval, issues relating to overall bilateral ties including ways to expand strategic ties between the two neighbouring nations are believed to have figured.

New Delhi has been maintaining that the development of the two countries are "intertwined", and that it is necessary to work together keeping in mind each other's security interests and sensitivities. "Held fruitful discussions tonight with @DrSJaishankar and Shri Ajit Doval on matters of mutual interest," Mr. Dissanayake said in a post on X.

In the delegation-level talks between Mr. Modi and Mr. Dissanayake, the Indian side is also likely to convey to the Sri Lankan leader New Delhi's expectations from Colombo to fulfil the aspirations of the Tamil community in the island nation.

Zakir Hussain

Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain admitted to U.S. hospital

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain has been admitted to the ICU of a San Francisco hospital with heart-related problems, his friend and flautist Rakesh Chaurasia said on Sunday.

The 73-year-old U.S.-based musician, who has taken the tabla to the global stage, had been having blood pressure issues, added Mr. Hussain's manager Nirmala Bachani.

"He has been admitted to a hospital in San Francisco for a heart-related problem for the last two weeks," the manager said.

Morocco welcomes Indian defence companies to set up production units

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Morocco is emerging as a springboard for India's ambitions to expand its footprint in Africa for defence exports. Pitching Morocco as a gateway to Africa and Europe for Indian companies, Abdeltif Loudyi, Morocco's Minister Delegate to the Head of the Government, and In-Charge of Administration of National Defence, said they would like "to offer state-of-the-art environment, zero bureaucracy, and profitability for Indian defence companies".

"Morocco and India enjoy excellent bilateral relations based on mutual respect, and have every potential to pursue their positive momentum in various fields, including defence," Mr. Loudyi said, addressing the India-Morocco defence industry seminar held in Rabat on December 9 and 10, and jointly organised by the Defence Ministries of the two countries, the Indian Embassy in Morocco, and the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers. "We want you in Morocco; we will support you," he said.

Stronger ties: Officials at the first edition of the India-Morocco Defence industry seminar held in Rabat. X@SIDMINDIA

This seminar can only strengthen the historic ties between Morocco and India, two emerging economies with growing strategic cooperation in the defence sector, the Minister observed.

Mr. Loudyi said the launch of the strategic defence industry project placed Morocco at the centre of attention as a defence development hub, and opened up promising prospects for investors interested in the defence and high-tech sectors, as demonstrated by the new strategic partnership signed between the National Defence Administration and the Tata Group, aimed at local production of the WhAP 8x8 ground combat vehicle. "The partnership between ADN and TASM is part of a broader drive to develop Morocco's defence industry, with the aim of gradually building strategic autonomy," he observed.

The seminar offered opportunities for joint ventures, technology sharing, and procurement potential for Indian defence companies in Morocco, officials said.

"Presentations by Moroccan officials emphasised the country's investor-friendly climate; free zones, including the Atlantic Free Zone; and incentives for foreign investments. The Indian delegation also visited the Atlantic Free Zone, gaining a comprehensive understanding of Morocco's industrial landscape," the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers said on social media platform X.

Bilateral trade between India and Morocco was approximately $4.1 billion in 2023, with major exports from India including refined petroleum, vehicles, and various chemicals. India is the largest buyer of phosphate from Morocco.

Facing flak, West Bengal Minister says he is secular

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Under fire for his remarks that Muslims will become majority, West Bengal Minister Firhad Hakim said on Sunday that he is a secular person and will remain so till death.

"I am a secular person and will die as a secular person," Mr. Hakim told journalists. The Trinamool Congress leader's statement comes after a video, in which he is heard saying that he does not consider Muslims as minority and by the grace of Allah Muslims will become majority, triggered a controversy.

Mr. Hakim's remarks evoked strong reactions from not only Opposition parties but also from leaders of the Trinamool Congress. Senior party leader Kunal Ghosh came in defence of the party colleague and said Opposition leaders "misinterpreted and twisted" his remarks.

'Manmohan Singh believed India would never accept a Sikh PM'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Six years before taking oath of office, Manmohan Singh believed that the country would never accept a Sikh as Prime Minister, Congress veteran Mani Shankar Aiyar has revealed in his memoir.

In the second volume of his memoir *A Maverick in Politics,* published by Juggernaut Books, Mr. Aiyar recalls the time when he tried to persuade Dr. Singh to join the Trinamool Congress.

In January 1998, during Mr. Aiyar's brief stint with the Trinamool, he suggested to Trinamool supremo Mamata Banerjee that she induct Dr. Singh, who had earlier expressed his "huge dissatisfaction" with the Congress under the late Sitaram Kesri.

"Mamata enthusiastically endorsed my proposal that I meet Doctor (Manmohan Singh) Sahib in Delhi to make to him the offer of the seat (Calcutta North-west) on behalf of the Trinamool Congress," he writes, adding, he had Ms. Banerjee's authority to offer Dr. Singh the Prime Ministership, "if confusion prevailed in the country again".

"My expectation was that he would probably say 'no', but there was an off chance that he might say 'yes'. But nothing prepared me for the answer I actually received. After listening to me patiently, he shook his head and almost mournfully replied, 'This country will never accept a Sikh as prime minister.' It was a reflection of the long-lasting trauma inflicted on the Sikh community by the country's armed action in the sacred premises of the Golden Temple and the Sikh pogrom in Delhi and elsewhere during the first few days of Rajiv's (Gandhi) premiership," Mr. Aiyer notes.

'Pranab as PM'

The Congress veteran recounts his early years in politics; negotiating through the tenure of late Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao; his changing equations with the Gandhis, especially Rahul Gandhi; and eventually fading out from the party (the phase from 2016-2024).

Talking about the "stasis in governance" during the United Progressive Alliance-II government, the 83-year-old says he believes Dr. Singh should have been elevated to the role of President of India in 2012, and Pranab Mukherjee should have been made the Prime Minister.

In his memoir, Mani Shankar Aiyar recalls the time when he tried to persuade Manmohan Singh to join Trinamool Congress. M. SRINATH

"In 2012, the Prime Minister (Dr. Singh) underwent operations for multiple coronary bypasses. He never quite recovered physically. It slowed him down and this showed up in governance. As for the party, there was no official announcement about the Congress president's (Sonia Gandhi) health when she took ill at about the same time as the Prime Minister," Mr. Aiyar notes.

He quotes Mukherjee as saying in his memoir that while Ms. Gandhi was "on holiday in the Kausambi hills", she had given the "vague impression" that she was considering making Dr. Singh the "presidential nominee".

"The choice of Rashtrapati: Manmohan Singh or Pranab Mukherjee. Personally, I was of the view that Pranab Mukherjee should have been given the reins of the government and Dr Manmohan Singh elevated to President of India when the office of Rashtrapati presented an opening in 2012," Mr. Aiyer writes.

From talking about his wife Suneet's meltdown in the wake of a series of alleged scams during UPA-II to his own assessment of the Singh government's mishandling of the challenges, particularly the Anna Hazare-led agitation under the banner of 'India Against Corruption', Mr. Aiyar's book is an insider's account of the political turbulence the Congress encountered between 2009 and 2014.

"The Minister of Home Affairs, PC (P. Chidambaram) who initially refused Anna Hazare permission to conduct his fast in the Ram Lila grounds, eventually caved in and the Ram Lila grounds became 'ground zero' for a much-publicized agitation. I think the lowest point in UPA-II's reign was when three Union Ministers went to Delhi airport to receive the private aircraft of Baba Ramdev, the highly controversial 'godman' who was supporting Anna Hazare," Mr. Aiyer writes.

Justice Yadav may appear before SC Collegium

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, who allegedly made controversial statements at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) function, is likely to appear before the Supreme Court Collegium soon to explain his stand on the controversy.

The top court on December 10 took note of news reports and sought a report from the Allahabad High Court.

Supreme Court sources said Justice Yadav is likely to be asked to appear and put forth his version as per established practices.

No Central interference in Cabinet allocation, says BJP Maharashtra president

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

Key event: Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule taking oath as a Cabinet Minister during the ceremony in Nagpur. PTI

There was no friction among the Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party in Maharashtra, and there was no Central interference in the Cabinet allocation discussion, BJP State president and Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule said in an interview to *The Hindu*.

Mr. Bawankule denied speculation that the Mahayuti alliance leaders had travelled to Delhi to meet Union Minister Amit Shah to resolve their differences over the allocation of Cabinet berths. "Mr. Shah and Narendra Modi gave complete freedom to the Maharashtra leaders to take the discussions ahead. Nobody was upset here," he said.

"The Centre took a call only on the policy decisions. Otherwise, nobody went to Delhi with demands, Cabinet expectations, or for negotiations," he told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Bawankule elaborated on the formula for deciding the names of the leaders who were given an opportunity for a position in the Cabinet. "Cabinet expansion has been done with only one goal in mind – to bring on board the performing leadership which will be able to run the government efficiently, and which will be able to deliver on the manifesto within 100 days," he said.

Asked if the BJP had made any suggestions to the Shiv Sena and the NCP on ministerial names, Mr. Bawankule said that each party had taken its own independent call.

Asked to elaborate on the understanding, Mr. Bawankule spoke of the discussions around portfolios.

"Each party wanted to see if, apart from the portfolios they had handled in the last government, they could get one or two more key portfolios. But all the leaders had a compromising stance. Everyone was clear that only apt and reasonable demands should be made, and only the reasonable demands should be fulfilled. There would have been a problem had there been any unrealistic demands," he said.

Bhujbal out, Shelar in: 39 join Maharashtra Cabinet

The Cabinet includes 19 Ministers from the BJP, 11 from the Shiv Sena, and nine from the NCP; Ajit Pawar says those excluded will be accommodated midway through the term of the government

Abhinay Deshpande
MUMBAI

After days of friction and wrangling, the Devendra Fadnavis government in Maharashtra was expanded with 39 Ministers on Sunday, bringing the Cabinet strength to 42. The Cabinet includes 19 Ministers from the BJP, 11 from the Shiv Sena, and nine from the NCP. There are four women.

Prominent names include BJP State president Chandrashekhar Bawankule and party leaders Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and Girish Mahajan; Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar; Shiv Sena leaders Gulabrao Patil, Pratap Sarnaik, Dada Bhuse, and Sanjay Rathod; and NCP leader Hasan Mushrif. Chhagan Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil of the NCP, and Sudhir Mungantiwar and Vijay Kumar Gavit of the BJP were among those who did not get the call.

Taking charge: Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan with BJP leader Chandrakant Patil during the swearing-in ceremony on Sunday. PTI

Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan administered the Oath of Office and Secrecy to the new Ministers at the Raj Bhavan in Nagpur, marking the first swearing-in of the Cabinet in the State's second capital in 33 years. The swearing-in was previously held in the city during the Sudhakarrao Naik government in 1991.

The week-long Winter Session of the State legislature will begin in Nagpur on Monday. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and his deputies, Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, took oath in Mumbai on December 5, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other NDA leaders.

Other appointments

Mr. Pawar said those excluded would be considered for appointment during the government's five-year tenure.

"We have decided to allow others for two-and-a-half years, ensuring more regions and districts get representation," he said addressing NCP workers in Nagpur ahead of the expansion.

"We have decided that during the five-year tenure of this government, we will allow others also for two-and-a-half years, which means many will get a chance to become Ministers and State Ministers. Accordingly, many districts and regions will get representation," he said.

Mr. Fadnavis announced that the newly sworn-in Ministers will undergo a performance audit during their tenure. The Chief Minister also said that 20 Bills will be presented during the Winter Session of the Legislature, marking what he called the beginning of "dynamic governance" in the Maharashtra.

The Mahayuti alliance secured a landslide victory in the November 20 Assembly election, winning 230 of the 288 seats.

Congress inconsistent on EVM issue, says Omar

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Expressing faith in the electronic voting machines, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has said the Congress opposes it only when results are not to its expectations.

Striking a differing note within the INDIA in a recent interview with PTI, Mr. Abdullah, whose National Conference is part of the bloc, said, "EVMs can't be a problem only when you lose elections."

"They are the same EVMs when you get 100-plus members of Parliament and celebrate it as a victory for your party. You can't a few months later turn around and say don't like them now because election results were different," he said.

The Chief Minister said if the Congress had issues with EVMs it should be consistent in raising it. "If you have problems, you should be consistent in raising it. If you don't trust the machines then don't try to contest elections," Mr. Abdullah said.

Tharoor clarifies on calling George Soros a 'friend'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor on Sunday clarified that he knew U.S. investor George Soros in a "social sense" and the last time he met Mr. Soros was at Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri's residence in New York when Mr. Puri was a diplomat.

He took to X to issue this "clarification" after an earlier post of his calling Mr. Soros a friend went viral.

"Since there is so much unhealthy curiosity about this tweet, I knew Mr. Soros well in my @UN [United Nation] days as an upstanding international-minded resident of New York. He was a friend in the social sense: I have never received or solicited a penny from him or any of his foundations for myself or any institution or cause I supported," he said on Sunday.

Though the Congress MP said he hopes his latest post would clarify the "absurd allegations out of a fifteen-year-old innocuous tweet. But knowing how the troll factory works. I have no doubt it won't!"

PM invokes Nehru to distract from his own 'failures', says Cong.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Jairam Ramesh

The Congress hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, alleging that defamation of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and minimum democratic governance was his model.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Mr. Modi had an "obsession" with Mr. Nehru as he invoked the first Prime Minister to distract the nation's attention from his "own failures" and current challenges on which he maintained a "complete silence".

The Congress statement came a day after Mr. Modi attacked the party during the debate on the "Glorious 75-year journey of India's Constitution". "It was the famous French philosopher Voltaire who had first said that if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him. For our self-anointed divinity – if Nehru had not existed – it would have been necessary to invent him," Mr. Ramesh said.

He said that Mr. Nehru was necessary to deny the nation's many achievements before May 2014.

In another post on X, he said, "In his rant in the Lok Sabha yesterday, the PM attacked Nehru on the First Amendment to the Constitution – which was carried out with effect from June 18th, 1951." Explaining why this amendment was brought, the Congress leader said, it was carried out for three reasons.

Three reasons

"One, to deal with communal propaganda at a most sensitive time. Two, to protect Zamindari abolition laws that were being struck down by the courts. Three, to protect reservations in education and employment for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and OBCs that had been rejected by the courts," the Congress leader said.

Modi refers to past to build a fresh narrative

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the debate in the Lok Sabha on the journey of the Constitution was full of references to the past.

Some of them, including references to the late Purushottam Das Tandon, former Congress chief, and the late K.M. Munshi, who was a Minister in the Nehru government, were packed with political narrative-building.

Mr. Modi quoted Tandon's views with regard to India's glorious past and its past experiences with democracy predating the British. He quoted Munshi's advocacy of a Uniform Civil Code over a religion-based personal law. The UCC is a core issue for the BJP and Mr. Modi repeated his government's intention to bring in what he terms a "Secular Civil Code" .

Munshi parted ways with the Congress in the 1950s and formed the Swatantra Party, and was one of the founders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

"Prime Minister Modi raised the issue of Tandon to build and strengthen

Narendra Modi

two narratives – how Nehru was anti-democratic and turned the Congress into the fiefdom of one particular family; and second, Nehru was opposed to 'pro-Hindu' leaders right from the beginning. Tandon was known for being a 'pro-Hindu' nationalist leader within the Congress, and was opposed to Nehru's policy of 'Muslim appeasement'. Tandon defeated Nehru's candidate in the election for Congress president. But Nehru made Tandon resign in 1951, threatening to walk out of Congress Working Committee," Arun Anand, author of two books on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, including *The Saffron Surge: Untold Story of RSS Leadership*, said.

It was also, BJP leaders said, a comment on what they say is the situation within the Congress, with the sidelining of the "G23" group of leaders who attempted to lead an eventually unsuccessful banner of revolt within the Congress a few years ago.

"The Congress is on a particular path, [and] due to the leadership of the Gandhis, it appears irreversible. The recollection of what happened to leaders like Munshi and Tandon shows that Congress had all manner of opinion within its fold, including of Hindu consciousness, generally espoused by leaders who were not part of the dynasty. Under the one-family rule, those strains of opinions have been weeded out," a senior office-bearer of the BJP said.

BJP questions Rajiv Gandhi Foundation's past connection with 'Soros-linked' entity

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday alleged that the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, "a key vehicle for the Congress party", had in 2007-08 partnered with the Human Rights Law Network, an organisation that purportedly received substantial funding from George Soros's Open Society Institute.

Through X posts, the BJP asked if the foundation was using "foreign funds to push anti-national agendas?" The foundation is chaired by Congress leader Sonia Gandhi.

The party asks if the foundation was using foreign funds to push 'anti-national agendas'

"Well, in 2007-08, RGF partnered with the Human Rights Law Network, an organisation that received substantial funding from George Soros' Open Society Institute. Why would a foundation linked to a major Indian political party tie up with a foreign organisation with such dubious connections?" it said.

"How can the Congress tie up with such organisations that have consistently sought to undermine India's sovereignty and national security? What were the true intentions of the tie-up between RGF and HRLN?" the BJP added.

The party alleged that in 2018-19, RGF had teamed up with the Aman Biradari Trust, founded by "none other than another Soros ally Harsh Mander".

"Mander, who was involved in drafting the anti-Hindu Communal Violence Bill as a member of Sonia Gandhi's National Advisory Council, is yet another link in a troubling chain of foreign influence" it said.

Rajasthan Council of School Education
S. Radha Krishnan Shiksha Sankul, 5th Block, IInd&IIIrd Floor, JLN Marg, Jaipur - 17
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No. P. 6 ( ) /RCScE/Jai./ict/ATL/2024-25/ 4509 Date : 13-12-2024

NOTICE INVITING e-BID (NIB : 17/2024-25)

Request for proposal invited for Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning of Smart Class in 714 Govt. Schools up to 12.30 PM of dated 03/01/2025. Other details may be seen in the Bidding Document at State Public Procurement Portal website www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in or website "www.rajsmsa.nic.in" and e-Proc portal.

UBN : RSE2425GLOB01922
Estimated cost: 678.30 Lacs

Raj.Samwad/C/24/9139

State Project Director
RCScE, Jaipur

ओएनजीसी ONGC
Godavari Bhavan, Rajahmundry, Asset, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh
Phone: 9385261788 / 9969228745 / 9968282973

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR DEMAND ASSESSMENT

ONGC, Rajahmundry Asset invites EOI from potential gas buyers/ service providers for demand assessment of Natural Gas available on fall back basis from the **Malleswaram (16° 21' 30.02" N, 81° 17' 06.80" E) field.** The details are as follows:

Max Gas Quantity, SCMD	Delivery Point	Period of availability	Delivery Pressure (Ksc)	Gas Quality
50,000	MSAA EPS	5 Years	1-3 Kg/cm2	As is where is
			250 Kg/cm2	PNGRB
			any other requirement (consumer to specify)	

Prospective buyers and service providers may log into **https://tenders.ongc.co.in** for further details. Also, requested to fill out the response sheet available in the website. For further queries, Contact: **barailly_sudamakumar@ongc.co.in / n_aadarsh@ongc.co.in**

AJMER VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED, AJMER
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Corporate Identification Number (CIN) – U40109RJ2000SGC016482
Regd. Off. Vidyut Bhawan, Panchsheel Nagar, Makarwali Road, Ajmer 305004
E-mail sesolaravvnl@gmail.com,Website:-www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl

E- Tender Notice NIB Code :- AVV2425A0126

E-bids are invited in two parts (Techno-Commercial Bid & Price Bid) from eligible bidders for Supply, Erection, Installation, Testing & commissioning of material/equipment regarding following activities at 17 circles (Sikar, Chittorgarh, Jhunjhunu, Bhilwara, Neem ka Thana, Udaipur, Deedwana-Kuchaman, Ajmer, Dungarpur, Banswara, Pratapgarh, Shahpura, Nagaur, Salumbar, Kekri, Beawar, Rajsamand) of Ajmer Discom of Rajasthan State on turnkey basis against **TN DSM-18 to TN-37:-**
(A) DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE work for segregation of 11 KV mixed feeders under REVAMPED REFORMS-BASED AND RESULTS-LINKED, DISTRIBUTION SECTOR SCHEME (RDSS).
(B) Development of decentralized Solar Power plant in the vicinity of 33/11 KV substation on Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) mode including O&M of solar plant & connecting line for 10 years.
(C) Network management of 33/11 kV substation and downstream network for 10 years
All the details regarding tenders are available at our website www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl and www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. In future, corrigendum/ extension etc. if any, shall be published only at web site www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl and www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in.

Raj.Samwad/C/24/9114 Superintending Engineer (Solar)

INBRIEF

Lok Sabha defeats Rajya Sabha in cricket match

In a friendly cricket match organised to create awareness of tuberculosis, Lok Sabha Speaker XI defeated Rajya Sabha Chairman XI by 73 runs in New Delhi on Sunday. BJP MP Anurag Thakur was the man of the match, scoring an unbeaten 111 runs from 59 balls. Speaker XI set a target of 251 runs after losing seven wickets in 20 overs. Chairman XI scored 178, losing eight wickets. Former cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin scored 74 runs of 42 balls for the Rajya Sabha team. He and Minister Rammohan Naidu won the best batter award. Lok Sabha members Deepender Hooda and Nishikant Dubey got the prizes for best bowler and best fielder, respectively.

India seeks strong subsidy rules for high seas fishing

India has pitched at the World Trade Organization (WTO) for stricter regulations on subsidies granted by countries that are engaged in high seas fishing activities, an official said. An Indian document submitted at the WTO has noted that it provides a modest $35 per fisher annually, compared to subsidies as high as $76,000 per fisher per year in some European nations. India also suggested that historical subsidisers should seek permission of the Committee on Fisheries Subsidies for grant of subsidies in future. The country has made these remarks in the meetings of the Negotiating Group on Rules (Fisheries subsidies), which are going on in Geneva. PTI

Listening to music helps us discover the art within: Justice Muralidhar

Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna presented with *The Hindu* Sangita Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi Award at the annual Conference and Concerts of the Music Academy; singer says award is a blessing, and carries with it a responsibility

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

High honour: Justice S. Muralidhar (retd), former Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, presents *The Hindu* Sangita Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi Award to Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna at the Music Academy in Chennai on Sunday. N. Murali, President, Music Academy, and Carnatic singers Bombay Jayashri Ramnath and S. Sowmya are present. R. RAVINDRAN

Justice S. Muralidhar (retd), former Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, on Sunday said that to discover the art "within each of us, we must be prepared to let the music unpeel the layers below which it lies hidden and allow our artistic self to introduce itself to us".

"It can happen if the music is listened to, not just heard or watched. And it can happen if we don't let our knowledge of music come in the way of our enjoying it in the present moment," he said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 98th annual Conference and Concerts of the Music Academy here, he said that the 2024 Sangita Kalanidhi-designate, Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna, had made his choices clear – musically and politically. He was prepared to face the consequences of such choices. He had a precedent in "MS Amma, who also made clear and courageous choices," Justice Muralidhar said.

Her opting to sing *Tamizh Isai* earned her a five-year ban from this Academy. Thankfully, it made amends and honoured her with the Sangita Kalanidhi in 1968, he recalled.

Mr. Krishna, who was presented with *The Hindu* Sangita Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi Award, in his speech, said he was blessed to receive an award instituted in her memory.

"For a singer like me to receive an award instituted in her memory is not just a signal honour but a blessing. Even more, it carries with it a responsibility: that I sing not just with my trained voice, not just with a concentrating mind, but with my very being, my life, my all. I thank *The Hindu* for reposing that responsibility on me," he said.

Sabha culture

With so much happening in the virtual universe, Mr. Krishna said, "We have forgotten Carnatic music's sabha culture."

"I was told by many prominent musicians that between June and September this year, there were hardly any sabha concerts. The sabha network is a unique feeder system that provides consistent opportunities to musicians who are at various stages in their musical career. The smaller sabhas help them gain experience, receive constructive feedback from *rasikas* and rise in the profession. This network has weakened and this should worry all of us," he said.

N. Murali, President of the Music Academy, said that Justice Muralidhar was widely respected for his integrity, forthrightness, erudition, incisiveness, discipline and above all, a self-effacing nature.

He was a keen and ardent *rasika* and a connoisseur of Carnatic music and had made time to attend concerts during the season.

On Mr. Krishna, he said that the singer gave his first concert at the age of 12 in 1988 during the Academy's Spirit of Youth series.

His musical career had been truly a voyage of exploration and within the confines of the Carnatic tone, he added.

Carnatic vocalists Bombay Jayashri and S. Sowmya graced the occasion.

The Sangita Kalanidhi Award would be presented to Mr. Krishna at the *Sadas* on January 1.

Ram temple gets award from British Safety Council

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Ram Temple project in Ayodhya bagged the Sword of Honour award from the British Safety Council, said Nripendra Misra, chairman of the construction committee of Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, on Sunday.

Mr. Misra said the Sword of Honour is one of the prestigious accolades in safety management, which is given after the British Safety Council conducts the audit of the process and practices, and finally does an on-site activity assessment.

"Only those who achieve a five-star assessment are eligible to enter for the Sword of Honour award contest. Earlier M/s Larsen & Toubro responsible for the construction of the temple were also awarded 'Golden Trophy' by the National Safety Council for safety measures taken in the construction of Ram Temple," he said.

Mr. Misra said the construction of the first and second floors, including the "*Shikhar*" (top), of the temple along with other significant temples has entered the last phase.

The construction is likely to be completed by June 2025.

Jaishankar thanks Moldova for helping Indians during the Ukraine crisis

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

S. Jaishankar and Mihail Popsoi during the joint inauguration of the Embassy of Republic of Moldova, in New Delhi. PTI

India on Sunday expressed appreciation for the support that Moldova extended in airlifting stranded Indian nationals who had to be evacuated when the war in Ukraine broke out in February 2022. India's appreciation was conveyed by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar at an event held here, where the Embassy of Moldova was officially inaugurated in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Moldova Mihail Popsoi.

"Moldova extended crucial help during the Operation Ganga to evacuate the very large number of stranded Indian students during the Ukraine crisis," Mr. Jaishankar said acknowledging Moldova's support to the Indian citizens in Ukraine who faced a serious threat when Russian forces began the 'special military operation' against Ukraine. Operation Ganga was started to airlift Indian students and professionals who were based in Ukraine. At least 20,000 Indian citizens in Ukraine were evacuated with the help of neighbouring Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Moldova and Hungary.

Mr. Jaishankar also announced that India would open an embassy in Moldova in "not so distant future". He said India and Moldova, which is located in a strategically important part of eastern Europe, have a "shared vision of the world that values peace, understanding and cooperation".

The Embassy of Moldova has been operating out of New Delhi for around a year but Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Popsoi on Sunday unveiled the official insignia, thereby formally inaugurating it.

Addressing the event, Mr. Popsoi said the inauguration of the Embassy of Moldova is a special moment in the relation between the two sides. "We conducted second round of foreign office consultation after a gap of 21 years reaffirming political engagement. The first official visit of our minister of education happened just two weeks ago. This year we launched a scholarship programme for Indian students and we will expand this initiative," said Mr. Popsoi.

"Despite geographical distance and different traditions, Moldova and India have always maintained a bond of mutual respect and understanding," he said.

Centre launches Jalvahak scheme for cargo movement via inland waterways

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

New network: Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, flags off cargo vessels in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

The Centre on Sunday launched the Jalvahak scheme to boost long-haul cargo movement via inland waterways.

The scheme incentivises cargo transport on National Waterways 1 (Ganga), 2 (Brahmaputra), and 16 (Barak) and provides an opportunity for the trade interests to explore movement of cargo via waterways with positive economic value proposition, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said.

He flagged off cargo ships *MV AAI*, *MV Homi Bhaba*, and *MV Trishul* along with two dumb barges Ajay and Dikhu from the G.R. Jetty in Kolkata.

This marks the beginning of fixed scheduled sailing service of cargo vessels from Haldia for NW-1 (Ganga) and NW-2 (Brahmaputra), the Ministry said in a statement.

"With its advantage of being an economical, ecologically sound, and efficient mode of transportation, we want to boost cargo movement via waterways to decongest the railways and roadways," Mr. Sonowal said.

Further, the regular scheduled freight service, which began from Kolkata, will ensure that the cargo is transported and delivered within a stipulated time frame, he said.

35% reimbursement

The Jalvahak scheme offers reimbursement of up to 35% of the total operating expenditure incurred, the Ministry said.

To encourage the business proposition of vessel operators, the scheme encourages cargo owners to hire vessels owned or operated by government entities. "The incentive scheme is ideal for major shipping companies, freight forwarders, trade bodies and associations that handle bulk and containerised cargo. By opting for the scheme, it provides them an opportunity to optimise their supply chain network. The scheme is initially valid for three years."

The fixed day scheduled sailing service will ply vessels between Kolkata-Patna-Varanasi-Patna-Kolkata stretch of NW-1 and between Kolkata and Pandu in Guwahati on NW-2 via Indo Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR), the Ministry said.

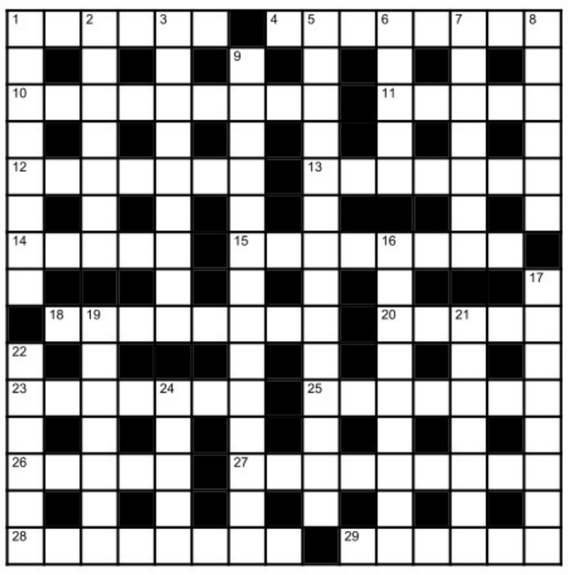
UltraTech Cement said it became the first cement company to leverage NW-1 for gypsum transport at scale.

TH CROSSWORD + 14357

(set by KrisKross)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Default career - "Green Energy" (6)
4 End of hapless sailors in spacecraft (8)
10 Dirty cat's home filled with basically ugly whiskers (9)
11 Expand novel about capturing maiden's heart (5)
12 A friend initially moves ASAP possibly (7)
13 Ordinary vehicle with poor acceleration (7)
14 Say, perfect partners splitting the fee regularly (5)
15 Part of group accepting Republican (8)
18 Stall near house finally sheltering animal (8)
20 Most online claims rejected: "Incorrect" (3,2)
23 Principal setter's collection of documents (7)
25 Americans in civil war are those getting pulled? (7)
26 Adds digits without mistake essentially (5)
27 King inviting head of excavators near a pit to have another look (2-7)
28 Oscar led child away, leaving cold, walled city in India (3,5)
29 Customs in America taking a very long time (6)

Down

1 Vagrant man in tears, getting leftovers (8)
2 Different route connecting North and South of Rajasthan - it's free of charge (7)
3 Printer to remove contents of book in comic genre (9)
5 Very gentle woman losing ring, made a courtroom drama (6,5,3)
6 Horse circling white tree (5)
7 Spanish gentleman concealed devious goal (7)
8 Breakfast dish with bad smell, extremely awful (6)
9 Horrible people face home truths unhappily (4,2,3,5)
16 Engineer says "Brief Note: no unknown, new tools" (5,4)
17 Lady with family members heading off for seafood (8)
19 Up brewing iced tea, mostly around 10 (7)
21 Spooner's conference is packed with people (7)
22 Hide impression? (6)
24 Paper missing the first edition (5)

SUDOKU

8					6			
		3		9	1		6	8
9		7		3	8	5		
	1							
5	4						3	6
							9	
		4	2	8		6		7
2	7		1	5		9		
			6					4

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	9	2	3	5	6	8	1	4
8	6	3	9	4	1	5	7	2
5	4	1	8	2	7	6	9	3
1	5	8	7	3	4	9	2	6
6	7	4	2	9	5	1	3	8
2	3	9	1	6	8	7	4	5
4	8	7	6	1	2	3	5	9
3	1	5	4	8	9	2	6	7
9	2	6	5	7	3	4	8	1

FAITH

Ramana Maharshi's reach

The guidance of a guru is paramount for anyone at any stage in life. It is only under the tutelage of a saintly person who has detached himself from material life that an ordinary person learns to navigate life. From learning all that one can to leading a virtuous life, realising god and attaining moksha, the role of a guru is immeasurable, said P. Swaminathan in a discourse.

One such persona who made a huge difference in the lives of many struggling to strike the mid-path between materialistic pursuits and spiritual goals is Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi. He abhorred false piety. Once, when a devotee prostrated before him over 108 times, the puzzled saint asked him what he was doing. When he replied saying he was paying his pranams to him, Ramana Maharshi said, in an easy tone, "Why did you have to trouble yourself physically to this extent? You could have simply greeted me with joined palms!" This paring to the bone of any activity and dispensing with false narratives was his hallmark which drew countless devotees to him.

Born in December, 1879 at Tiruchuzhi in Tamil Nadu, when the family moved to Madurai, he visited the Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple often and stationing himself in front of the statues of Arubathimoovar (63 Nayanmars), the young man became consumed by devotion of the Lord. One day, he 'borrowed' a few rupees form his brother and journeyed to Tiruvannamalai. After praying at Arunachaleswarar sannidhi, he renounced everything and attained yogic state. His teachings resonated with the crowds that grew with each passing day. He lived as he preached: with utter simplicity and zero acquisition.

Cover from pollution

RIGHTCHOICE

Amit Chhabra

The northern plains of India are currently grappling with one of the worst air pollution crises in years. The Air Quality Index (AQI) has persistently remained in the 'severe' category, with some areas hitting the maximum level of 500. The air has become 'unbreathable,' with many experiencing respiratory discomfort and other health issues.

Looking at the dire situation, health experts warn the current air quality is similar to smoking over 10 cigarettes a day, posing serious risks to short- and long-term health. Vulnerable groups, such as children, elderly and those with pre-existing conditions are at greater risk. With toxic air causing a surge in respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, preparedness extends beyond prevention. Health insurance has emerged as a crucial safety net, ensuring financial protection against the growing medical costs linked to pollution-related illnesses.

OPD coverage

Pollution rarely confines itself to hospital stays. It rather tends to hit in the form of eye irritations, skin allergies and breathing issues which often leads to more outpatient visits. For families, especially those with young children or senior citizens, these costs can accumulate quickly.

A single consultation in a metro city costs ₹1,000-1,500 and diagnostic tests can add another ₹5,000. Over time, these expenses can rival hospitalisation costs. OPD coverage, an often-overlooked feature in health insurance plans, can significantly lighten this financial burden, ensuring you don't pay out-of-pocket for frequent visits to the doctor.

Pre-existing conditions

Pollution worsens chronic illnesses like asthma, bronchitis and cardiovascular diseases. For those managing these conditions, frequent medical intervention becomes inevitable.

Policies are now more inclusive, with shorter waiting periods for pre-existing conditions and even immediate coverage in some cases. This evolution in health insurance ensures those already dealing with respiratory or chronic ailments aren't financially overwhelmed by pollution-triggered complications.

Case for high sum insured

Peak pollution seasons often bring unforeseen costs – from doctor visits to diagnostic tests and emergency hospitalisations. For families, a floater plan with a higher sum insured offers broad protection under one policy.

In cities like Delhi, where healthcare inflation is relentless, a policy with ₹10-25 lakh coverage per person – or a ₹1 crore umbrella for the family – has become prudent choice. In fact, insurers now offer riders that provide an unlimited sum insured for a single claim at a modest premium increase of 10-15%. Opting for a ₹10 lakh base plan with this rider ensures financial resilience in the face of escalating medical bills.

Critical illness cover

Pollution isn't just seasonal nuisance; it is a long-term risk multiplier. Conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiac issues and even cancer are more and more linked to poor air quality. The cost of managing these diseases can climb to ₹40-50 lakh, a financial burden most households are unprepared to shoulder.

A critical illness cover bridges this gap by offering a lump sum payout on diagnosis. This flexibility allows the insured to use the funds not just for treatment but also for related costs, such as lifestyle adjustments or income loss, providing a vital buffer against life-altering illnesses.

Beyond prevention

No mask, purifier, or closed-door policy can entirely shield you from the health impacts of hazardous air. But financial preparedness, in the form of a well-chosen health insurance plan, can help mitigate its toll.

As AQI levels nosedive year after year, it's time to move beyond temporary fixes and focus on a long-term strategy. Investing in health insurance is not just about handling medical expenses–it's about securing peace of mind in a world where toxic air is becoming an uninvited constant.

(The writer is CBO, general insurance at Policybazaar.com)

Answer to market volatility: your time horizon

If history is any indication, an adequate time horizon takes care of market corrections; as long as the fundamental quality remains intact, you should remain invested

PATIENCE PAYS

Joydeep Sen

When there is a market correction, investors are worried, as to where the bottom is and when the market would turn around. The fact is, no one knows the top or bottom of the market. Market prices do fluctuate, which is called volatility, a 'constant' in markets. In this context, we will discuss some historical data, which gives a perspective about the future.

Context

We will take instances of significant past corrections and the returns generated till date. Returns till date are calculated from the pre-correction peak i.e. even after you have suffered the correction, you have earned so much (as in the table) return till date.

What table says

Absolute decline indicates non-annualised fall in the market i.e. from peak to trough of that phase, what was the extent of decline.

Nifty50 TRI: market decline and returns till November 30, 2024 are represented by Nifty50 TRI.

Nifty50 represents a little more than 50% of the total equity market capitalisation of India.

TRI means the total returns index, which adds the dividends paid by the companies to the price appreciation of the stocks.

Events of volatility

Prior to 2000, it was the phase of 'dotcom' boom. In the initial phase of Internet, any company with 'dotcom' or something similar in the name was galloping at the stock market. People did not care about the fundamental quality of those companies. Valuations, as measured by the price-earnings multiple, were stretched as prices ran up to many times the earnings of the companies. It was so much that it was in bubble zone.

And whenever there is a bubble, it will burst at some point of time. When it burst, market fell 50%. From then till date, you would have earned 13% annualised returns. That is, even after suffering 50% fall, you earned 13% annualised returns. The inference is, as long as you have a long investment horizon, you take home decent returns, in spite of big market corrections.

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008 was another big event. It originated due to excesses in the U.S., but impacted the entire world. Stock markets crumbled, central banks all over the world cut interest rates and pumped in liquidity to support distressed economies. Our market, represented by Nifty50, fell 59%.

From that level till date, market has given 10% annualised returns.

Similarly, we had many other significant events leading to big market corrections, like COVID in 2020. In spite of corrections, market, over an adequate holding period, has rewarded patience.

Current situation

There was, and still is, some stretch in market valuations, in terms of price-earnings multiples. This stretch is more in the U.S. than in India.

When prices run ahead of reasonable valuations, it is in a way waiting for a trigger to correct. Since October 2024, the correction was triggered by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulling out of India. It was not just a simple selling of stocks, but in terms of quantum, the highest ever in a span of one month, in October 2024.

Our markets corrected, approximately 11-12% at the indices level, and higher for certain stocks. However, the important point is, there is no big adverse event happening, of the scale mentioned earlier in the table.

Whether the correction is over or not, or whether there would be another correction in the near future, is anyone's call. In a way, these corrections are healthy, as it brings valuations closer to historical averages from stretch zone.

The fundamental economic growth of India and the growth of corporates, remain very much in place. Market price in the short run is a function of many variables other than the quality or growth of the companies. As we saw over the last two months, big-time FPI sell-off was a reason for correction. However, this does not impact the growth of companies in India in the long run.

Conclusion

When the market is volatile and correcting, investors tend to get apprehensive and some may pull out of markets. However, as long as the fundamental quality remains intact, you should remain invested. Rather, the discounted price levels are a better time to buy more stocks. As we saw in the historical instances, trying to call the market bottom is futile. Just wait it out. Data analysis on Nifty50 and Sensex shows that over the history of the index, on holding periods of 10 years and longer, market has always given decent positive returns.

(The writer is a corporate trainer on financial markets and author)

Wait and profit

Despite corrections, the market, over an adequate holding period, has rewarded patience

Major Falls > 20% since 2000	Absolute Decline	Nifty 50 TRI*
2000 Dotcom Bubble	-50%	13% (19.3 times)
2004 Indian Election Uncertainty	-30%	14% (15.9 times)
2006 Global Rate Hike Selloff	-30%	12% (8.1 times)
2008 Global Financial Crisis	-59%	10% (4.7 times)
2010 European Debt Crisis	-27%	11% (4.5 times)
2015 Global Market Selloff (Yuan Devaluation)	-22%	12% (3.0 times)
2020 Covid Crash	-38%	16% (2.1 times)

* Annualized Returns from Peak till November 2024

SOURCE: FUNDSINDIA WEALTH CONVERSATIONS

Income returns or capital rise?

THINKINVESTOR

Choosing between bank deposits and bond funds is a choice between stable returns and higher expected returns with downside risk. A portfolio with a judicious mix is behaviourally optimal

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

We believe optimal diversification in a goal-based portfolio involves having capital-appreciation products (equity funds) and income-earning (recurring deposit) products. Previously, we discussed costs/benefits of investing in recurring deposits (RDs). Preference to earn interest income has often been called to question. There are three reasons why we believe earning interest income is more optimal than earning capital appreciation on bond investments.

Stability vs. downside risk

RDs earn interest income. Bond funds provide capital appreciation, which can be greater than interest income. That said, following are the reasons why you should consider earning interest income rather than capital appreciation: One, bond prices are inversely related to interest rates. That is, if interest rate declines, bond price go up. Therefore, funds that invest in bonds will generate capital appreciation when interest rate declines or when the bond market anticipates interest rate will decline. But by how much can interest rate decline? That depends on inflation in India, which currently is upwards of 4%. A floor (bottom) on interest rates places a cap (ceiling) on bond prices and, hence, on capital appreciation. But there is no ceiling on interest rates which can rise for several reasons. That means bond prices can dip more than they can go up. Why expose a goal-based portfolio to such risk?

Two, equity investments provide capital appreciation but exposes your portfolio to downside risk. It means you need income returns to provide stability to portfolio. Hence, RDs. In times of market crisis, when equity funds generate negative returns, RDs can provide stable returns.

Finally, interest-earning products such as RDs provide visibility of cash flows. Ignoring the small risk that the bank will default, you know today the maturity value of deposit. In contrast, your investments in bond funds fluctuate based on net asset value, which depends on the market price of the bonds in the portfolio.

Conclusion

Our argument does not consider taxes, as norms change. Note, capital appreciation via investing in an active bond fund is taxed at marginal tax rate of 30% similar to interest income. Choosing between bank deposits and bond funds is a choice between stable returns and higher expected returns with downside risk. A portfolio with a judicious mix of capital appreciation and income returns is optimal.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years — Loan amount 1 lakh, Tenure 5 years — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.85-24.00	10,834-14,384	2,167-2,877	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.45-14.85	10,984-11,856	2,197-2,371	NIL
ICICI Bank	10.85-16.25	10,834-12,226	2,167-2,445	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.05-18.75	10,884-12,902	2,177-2,580	Up to 2% (Maximum Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99-16.00	10,869-12,159	2,174-2,432	Up to 5%
Bank of India	10.85-16.10	10,834-12,186	2,167-2,437	Up to 1% (Min Rs 250 and Max Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	0.25% (Maximum Rs 5,000)
Punjab National Bank	11.40-17.95	10,971-12,683	2,194-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	10.15-16.00	10,660-12,159	2,132-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49-14.49	10,994-11,762	2,199-2,352	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-31.00	10,624-16,485	2,125-3,297	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	11.25-14.00	10,934-11,634	2,187-2,327	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.68	11,551	2,310	Up to 2% (Min. Rs 2,500 & Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	2% -3.5%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	NIL
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	9.00 - 12.70	10,379 - 11,300	Up to Rs 750
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	NIL
State Bank of India	9.10-10.15	10,403-10,660	NIL
IDBI Bank	8.90-9.70	10,355 - 10,550	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	NIL
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	Up to 1% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 9,000)
Karnataka Bank	9.13-11.61	10,411 - 11,024	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Punjab and Sind Bank***	8.85 - 10.25	10,343 - 10,685	0.25% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000)
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.75% (Max: Rs 10,000)
IDFC First Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	Up to Rs 10,000
City Union Bank	10.00-11.80	10,624-11,072	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holder.
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799.
***Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on December 11 — **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

TEL AVIV

Israel to close Dublin embassy citing 'extreme anti-Israel policies'

REUTERS

Israel will close its Dublin embassy due to the "extreme anti-Israel policies of the Irish government", Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said on Sunday, citing its recognition of a Palestinian state and support for legal action against Israel. Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said the decision was deeply regrettable. REUTERS

GOMA

Rwanda, Congo cancel peace talks to end conflict in eastern Congo

AFP

Planned talks between Congo and Rwanda were cancelled. Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwanda's President Paul Kagame were set to meet on Sunday in Angola, which has been mediating to put an end to conflict in eastern Congo between the Congolese army and M23 rebel group, which is allegedly backed by Rwanda. AP

WASHINGTON DC

ABC News to pay $15 million to settle defamation suit with Trump

AFP

ABC News will pay a $15 million to resolve a defamation lawsuit brought by President-elect Donald Trump. The case stemmed from on-air comments made by top anchor George Stephanopoulos, who said Mr. Trump was found "liable for rape" during an interview with U.S. Representative Nancy Mace that aired in March. AFP

CAPE TOWN

14 killed in French territory of Mayotte as Cyclone Chido strikes

AP

At least 14 persons have died and 246 were injured after Cyclone Chido caused devastating damage in the French territory of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean, France's Interior Ministry said on Sunday. The tropical cyclone blew through the southeastern Indian Ocean, also affecting the nearby islands of Comoros and Madagascar. AFP

Israeli forces kill 28 in Gaza Strip, attack school sheltering Palestinians

An Al-Jazeera journalist is among the casualties; nine killed as clusters of houses are bombed by Israel while some are set ablaze in the towns of Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun and Jabalia camp; 11 killed in three air strikes on houses in Gaza City

Reuters
CAIRO

Israeli troops killed at least 28 Palestinians, most of them in the northern Gaza Strip, on Sunday in air strikes and other attacks on targets that included a school sheltering displaced Gazans, medics and residents said.

They said at least 11 of the dead were killed in three separate Israeli air strikes on Gaza City houses, nine were killed in the towns of Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun and Jabalia camp and two were killed by drone fire in Rafah.

Residents said clusters of houses were bombed and some set ablaze in the three towns. The Israeli Army has been operating in the towns for over two months.

Childhood horror: Children look on after an attack at a tent camp sheltering displaced people in Deir Al-Balah on Sunday. REUTERS

An Israeli airstrike hit the civil emergency centre in the Nuseirat market area in the central Gaza Strip, killing Ahmed Al-Louh, a video journalist for Al Jazeera TV, and five other persons.

The Israeli military said the three Gaza City houses belonged to militants planning imminent attacks. It said steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harming civilians beforehand, including the use of precise munitions and aerial surveillance.

The military issued a photo showing the weapons it said were seized in Beit Lahiya that included explosives and dozens of grenades.

In Beit Hanoun, Israeli forces besieged families sheltering in Khalil Aweida school before storming it and ordering them to head towards Gaza City, the medics and residents said.

Medics said several people were killed and wounded during the raid on the school while the Army detained many men. The number killed was not immediately clear.

The military said it struck down dozens of militants from the air and on the ground and captured others in Beit Hanoun.

Medical centre

Separately, Israel said its struck a command and control center in a compound in the Abu Shabak clinic in northern Gaza used by Hamas to store weapons. The Gaza Health Ministry said the medical center, which also included a mental health clinic, was destroyed.

Israel to double population on occupied Golan Heights

Reuters
JERUSALEM

Israel captured most of the strategic Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War, annexing it in 1981. AFP

Israel agreed on Sunday to double its population on the occupied Golan Heights while saying threats from Syria remained despite the moderate tone of rebel leaders who ousted President Bashar al-Assad a week ago.

"Strengthening the Golan is strengthening the State of Israel, and it is especially important at this time. We will continue to hold onto it, cause it to blossom, and settle in it," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement.

Israel captured most of the strategic plateau from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War, annexing it in 1981.

In 2019, then-President Donald Trump declared U.S. support for Israeli sovereignty over the Golan, but the annexation has not been recognised by most countries. Syria demands Israel withdraw but Israel refuses, citing security concerns. Various peace efforts have failed.

"The immediate risks to the country have not disappeared and the latest developments in Syria increase the strength of the threat," Defence Minister Israel Katz told officials examining Israel's defence Budget. Mr. Netanyahu's office said the government approved a more than 40-million-shekel ($11 million) plan to encourage demographic growth in the Golan.

At least 39 killed in Niger in attacks near Burkina Faso

Agence France-Presse
NIAMEY

Thirty-nine people have been killed in two attacks in recent days in western Niger, near the border with Burkina Faso, Niamey's Defence Ministry said Saturday.

"Two horrific tragedies happened in the communities of Libiri and Kokorou, criminals cornered by constant operations by defence and security forces launched attacks on defenceless civilian populations," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The "barbaric acts" saw 21 people killed in Libiri and 18 in Kokorou, including children, the Ministry said.

The operations took place from December 12 to 14, the statement said.

S. Korean leader seeks calm after impeachment of Yoon

Associated Press
SEOUL

South Korea's opposition leader offered on Sunday to work with the government to ease the political tumult as officials sought to reassure allies and markets, a day after the opposition-controlled parliament voted to impeach conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol over a short-lived attempt to impose martial law.

Liberal Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung, whose party holds a majority in the National Assembly, urged the Constitutional Court to rule swiftly on Mr. Yoon's impeachment and proposed a special council for policy cooperation between the government and parliament.

Mr. Yoon's powers have been suspended until the court decides whether to remove him from office or reinstate him. If Mr. Yoon is dismissed, a national election to choose his successor must be held within 60 days.

Lee Jae-myung

Mr. Lee, who has led a fierce political offensive against Mr. Yoon's embattled government, is seen as the frontrunner to replace him. He lost the 2022 presidential election to Mr. Yoon by a razor-thin margin.

He told a televised news conference that a swift court ruling would be the only way to "minimise national confusion and the suffering of people."

The court will meet to discuss the case on Monday, and has up to 180 days to rule. But observers say that a court ruling could come faster. In the case of parliamentary impeachments of past presidents – Roh Moo-hyun in 2004 and Park Geun-hye in 2016 – the court spent 63 days and 91 days respectively before determining to reinstate Roh and dismiss Park.

Mr. Lee also proposed a national council where the government and the National Assembly would work together to stabilise state affairs, and said his party won't seek to impeach Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, a Yoon appointee who's now serving as acting President.

Brazilian President Lula discharged from hospital after surgery

Reuters
RIO DE JANEIRO

Doctors discharged Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva from hospital on Sunday, his medical team told reporters, after a pair of emergency surgeries last week to treat and prevent bleeding in his head.

The 79-year-old spoke publicly for the first time at a hospital press conference and the doctors said he will now continue his recovery from his home in Sao Paulo. An upbeat Lula said he was eager to get back to work as soon as possible, and his medical team gave him a green light to do so, though they advised him to avoid long flights.

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva

Russian tanker splits in storm, spilling oil into the Kerch Strait

Reuters
MOSCOW

A Russian oil tanker carrying thousands of tonnes of oil products split apart during a heavy storm on Sunday, spilling oil into the Kerch Strait, while another tanker was also in distress after sustaining damage, Russian officials said.

The vessels were in the Kerch Strait between mainland Russia and Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, when they issued distress signals.

Russian investigators opened two criminal cases to look into possible safety violations after at least one person was killed when the 136-metre *Volgoneft 212* tanker, with 15 people on board, split in half with its bow sinking.

The Russian-flagged vessel, built in 1969, was damaged and had run aground, officials said.

The second Russian-flagged ship, the 132-metre *Volgoneft 239*, was drifting after sustaining damage. It has a crew of 14 people and was built in 1973.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that our Client **Mr. R. SEETHARAMAIAH and Others,** residing at No.16, Telephone Layout, Pipeline Road, Sunkadakatte, Bangalore – 560 091, intends to buy the below mentioned Schedule Property which is owned by **Mr. KARAN VIJAY BOOLANI,** S/o Mr. Vijay Baldev Boolani, aged about 40 years, PAN: AERPB4122K, Adhaar: 260089470608, Residing at # 6A, Monolith Apartments, 7 Napeansea Road, Mumbai, Maharashtra – 400026.

The Owner represent that he is the absolute owner and he is in possession of the Schedule Property mentioned below and the Schedule Property is free from any kind of encumbrance, suits, and proceedings under any statute. Any person or persons/financial institutes asserting any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, gift, inheritance, bequest, possession, lis pendens, maintenance, easement, memorandum of understanding, agreement, power of attorney, option, right of first refusal, pre-emption or otherwise whatsoever is hereby required to notify the same in writing to the undersigned within a period of **Fifteen (15) days** from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof thereof failing which our Client will treat the title of the Schedule Property as clear and marketable and will proceed to enter into the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Agricultural Land bearing **Sy. No. 64/3** measuring **1 Acre and 08.03 Guntas** situated at **Kachohalli Village, Dasanpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore** and bounded on:
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BGRR/PvtSale/2024-25 — NOTICE FOR PRIVATE SALE OF GOLD — 14/12/2024

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged in the following Gold Loan accounts, with the under mentioned Branches of the Bank, which are overdue for redemption and which have not been regularized so far in spite of repeated notices, will be put for Private sale, in the respective Branches on any date after 25-12-2024 as shown below:

Br.Bangalore/Krishnarajapuram: VSR Complex, Old Madras Road, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore, Karnataka-560 036 Ph No. 080-25619070 :- 15616400019028,15616400015869,15616400020059.

Bangalore 14-12-2024 — Senior Vice President & Zonal Head

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only through KPP portal)

BWSSB invites Itemwar TENDERS from registered agencies for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (WWM-East), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore-09.

Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number		Amount put to tender EMD (in Rs.)	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1	(WWM-STP) C. Valley	BWSSB/EE(WWM-STP)CV/PB/372/2024-25, Dt: 14.11.2024 (Call-2)	1	Rs. 11,69,391/- Rs. 29,235/-	30.12.2024 upto 4:00 pm	01.01.2025 after 11:00 am
2		BWSSB/EE(WWM-STP)CV/PB/373/2024-25, Dt: 14.11.2024(Call-2)	2	Rs. 16,00,000/- Rs. 40,000/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWM-STP) C. Valley

Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore-09.

3	South-East 2	BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/TO/PB/2297/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024	3	Rs. 16,45,641/- Rs. 41,150/-	02.01.2025 upto 4:00 pm	04.01.2025 after 4:30 pm
4		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/TO/PB/2303/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024	4	Rs. 99,72,447/- Rs. 1,99,450/-		
5			5	Rs. 98,99,587/- Rs. 1,98,000/-		
6		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/TO/PB/2305/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024	6	Rs. 36,99,079/- Rs. 73,990/-		
7		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/TO/PB/2301/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024 (Reserved for SC category)	7	Rs. 34,76,995/- Rs. 34,770/-		
8		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/TO/PB/2299/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024 (Reserved for SC category)	8	Rs. 63,35,388/- Rs. 63,360/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-East-2)

9	East-1	BWSSB/EE(E-1)/PB/3319/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024	9	Rs. 33,18,958/- Rs. 66,400/-	30.12.2024 upto 4:00 pm	01.01.2025 after 5:00 pm
10			10	Rs. 43,14,068/- Rs. 86,300/-		
11			11	Rs. 29,98,674/- Rs. 60,000/-		
12		BWSSB/EE(E-1)/PB/3326/2024-25, Dt: 12.12.2024 (Reserved for ST category)	12	Rs. 40,61,738/- Rs. 40,700/-		
13			13	Rs. 25,38,466/- Rs. 25,400/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (East-1)

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-Procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/YC/3765/2024-25

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Neha Hemanthkumar Nair D/o Hemant Kumar Gopinathan Nair R/o 44a Sjr Eastwood Layout, Haralur Road, Off Sarjapur Road, Bengaluru - 560102 have changed my name to Neha Hemant Nair for all purposes.

I, Rupinder Kaur Chahal D/o Jagjit Singh R/o 15093 Prestige Tranquility, Budigere, Bangalore 560049 have changed my name to Rupinder Kaur for all purposes.

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Smith joins Root for most Test centuries against India

REUTERS

Steve Smith notched up a couple of milestones on his way to the 33rd Test century on Sunday. With his 10th three-figure knock, he joined England's Joe Root for most Test centuries against India and also moved past Steve Waugh in the list of most tons for Australia in Tests to be second after Ricky Ponting (41).

MASTERPLAN

Morkel reveals bowlers' strategy against a rampant Head

REUTERS

Indian bowling coach Morne Morkel discussed the strategy devised to counter Australian batter Travis Head during the second day of the ongoing Brisbane Test at the Gabba on Sunday. "Our plan for Travis in this game was to bowl over the wicket and target a straight line. We felt he handled it well in Adelaide," Morkel said.

HIGH PRAISE

Akash Deep has got some skill for sure, feels Smith

AP

India pacer Akash Deep may not have entered the wickets column on the second day of third Test but his ability to make the ball talk earned him high praise from Australian batting mainstay Steve Smith. "I thought Akash bowled really nicely, particularly that first spell. He was getting the ball to move with pretty significant movement," he said.

FLASHBACK

When he's in the zone, I almost go unnoticed: Head on Smith

AFP

Travis Head said that he enjoys batting with Steve Smith and hilariously noted that whenever the 35-year-old bats, he goes unnoticed. Smith roared back to form with his 33rd Test century."In the couple of years where he dominated, I felt like I was invisible at the other end. Today felt a little bit like that."

Head at it again and Smith finds his feet as Aussies rule the day

The left-hander's blistering 152 and Smith's 101 send Rohit's men on a leather hunt as Cummins' side finishes day two at 405 for seven; Bumrah shines again, returns with a five-wicket haul; Jadeja struggles to make an impact

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
BRISBANE

A batter enjoying a rich vein of form and a legend searching for runs joined forces as Australia relished a perfect Sunday here at the Gabba. With the series level at 1-1, the host gets an opportunity to press ahead even as the threat of rain lingers.

In his previous three Test knocks at this venue, Travis Head, with three ducks, never troubled the scorers. However, this time around, he kept the number-crunchers busy.

Just like Zaheer Abbas and Graham Gooch, classy batters of the past, the Australian southpaw too revealed a voracious appetite for Indian bowling. His 152, a follow-up to the 140 at Adelaide, ensured that the host sat pretty on the second day of the third Test.

Head found an ally in Steve Smith, who in his previous 24 innings in Tests, failed to score a ton. Amends were finally made and as Smith, scratchy to start with and magisterial later, scored 101, it proved to be a key component for Australia to post an unfinished first innings score of 405 for seven at close, with a belligerent Alex Carey and Mitchell Starc at the crease.

Earlier, Smith and Head combined once Marnus Labuschagne fell. It was an alliance of contrasts, Head slotted the fifth gear, Smith, meanwhile, survived lbw appeals and play-and-miss routines. The duo found the post-lunch phase to be productive and when Ravindra Jadeja came on, Head tucked into some freebies.

Smith, found his voice too, driving Akash Deep twice, while Head waded into Mohammed Siraj with slashes and pulls. Nitish Kumar found the batters too intimidating and soon Head reached his inevitable ton. After tea, Head dallied with Nitish on 112 but the edge proved tough for a diving Rohit Sharma at first slip.

Soon Smith etched his hundred and the belated post-celebratory swing of the bat reflected his enormous relief. He fell edging Jasprit Bumrah and Rohit plucked a fine catch but by then the 241-run fourth-wicket partnership had placed Australia on a strong pedestal. With the new ball, Bumrah (five for 72) continued to strike, and scalped Mitchell Marsh and Head.

Brisbane heat: Head's blazing knock put the Indians on the back foot. AP

Early strikes

In the morning, openers Usman Khawaja and Nathan McSweeney strived to extend the overnight score of 28 for no loss. But Bumrah had a contrarian idea and lured edges from the duo. The host struggled at 38 for two with Labuschagne and Smith at the crease. The latter had an exaggerated trigger moment, moving across the stumps a touch more than usual just at the release-point of the delivery.

There was a spot of gamesmanship as Siraj swapped the bails and Labuschagne reversed the change. Perhaps it distracted the batter as he reached out to a Nitish delivery and the edge flew to Virat Kohli. Australia 75 for three, and in need of a partnership.

It was a requirement that found an immediate response as Head swatted Nitish and drove Bumrah. Australia moved to 104 for three at lunch, a total that gained heft as the day wore on.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS
Usman Khawaja c Pant b Bumrah 21 *(54b, 3x4)*, Nathan McSweeney c Kohli b Bumrah 9 *(49b, 1x4)*, Marnus Labuschagne c Kohli b Nitish 12 *(55b)*, Steve Smith c Rohit b Bumrah 101 *(190b, 12x4)*, Travis Head c Pant b Bumrah 152 *(160b, 18x4)*, Mitchell Marsh c Kohli b Bumrah 5 *(16b)*, Alex Carey (batting) 45 *(47b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Pat Cummins c Pant b Siraj 20 *(33b, 1x4)*, Mitchell Starc (batting) 7 *(7b)*; Extras (lb-17, nb-5, w-11): 33; Total (for seven wkts. in 101 overs): 405.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-31 (Khawaja, 16.1 overs), 2-38 (McSweeney, 18.3), 3-75 (Labuschagne, 33.2), 4-316 (Smith, 82.6), 5-326 (Marsh, 86.2), 6-327 (Head, 86.5), 7-385 (Cummins, 97.5).

INDIA BOWLING
Bumrah 25-7-72-5, Siraj 22.2-4-97-1, Akash 24.4-5-78-0, Nitish 13-1-65-1, Jadeja 16-2-76-0.

Morkel backs the bowlers, says tough to counter Head

Lone-ranger: Bumrah's lion-hearted effort couldn't stop the marauding Aussies. X@BCCI

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
BRISBANE

After a long day for his wards in the park, Morne Morkel strode into the press conference hall. A hat-tip to centurions Travis Head and Steve Smith, and a fair assessment of the Indian attack were par for the course as the Indian bowling coach dealt with the media at the Gabba here on Sunday.

Morkel admitted that it was tough to counter Head: "He is in pretty good form, playing back-to-back innings, we can only give a lot of credit. For us with the ball, if you look at it from overs 50 to 80, it is where we sort of fall short, leaking a little bit, so that is one area we need to get better at. Steve Smith, we know, is a guy that can bat back and score runs, and they put a partnership and put us under pressure with a softer ball."

Doing a report card on his bowlers during the course of the third Test, Morkel said: "Akash (Deep) did well, bowled his heart out, same for (Mohammed) Siraj, he cramped early on in the day, so for him to still run in today and bowl, was great. (Jasprit) Bumrah is the number one bowler in the world and you need somebody to back him up but honestly I can't fault the effort of the other seamers."

And about Ravindra Jadeja, who had a rough outing, Morkel added: "Jaddu, coming into this match didn't have a lot of game time, but he is also a guy who has taken a lot of Test wickets. We wanted to bring in the left-arm option, he is also a guy, who can offer us a lot with the bat. Unfortunately today wasn't his day. He is a world-class player and he will work it out."

Got a bit of luck early, admits Smith

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
BRISBANE

A sense of relief was palpable as Steve Smith sat down for his media interaction at the Gabba here on Sunday. The cap low-slung on him, eyes blinking a bit to adjust to the light, and a half-smile creasing his face, the former Australia captain expressed his satisfaction about the century and his contribution to the team.

Discussing his knock, Smith said: "It was nice to get to three figures. It has been a while. It was cool to contribute to the team. It has been tricky in the first couple of games. Had a couple of nice balls and got strangled down the leg-side in Adelaide. I have been batting well the last month. I was sticking to my process, trusting that things will turn around. I got a bit of luck early on and made the most of it."

As for his aggressive fellow-centurion Travis Head, Smith said: "If we can sort of get to 30-odd overs when Travis comes in, it makes a big difference to the team. I think the seam probably starts to settle around 30, 40 overs and the ball stays quite hard. And you see guys batting at five, six and seven are able to get value for their shots."

What about the change in his stance? "I have changed my set-up in pretty much every game I have played for the last 15 years. I figure the best way to play on each surface. This one is a pretty bouncy track. So I was batting out of my crease a bit, trying to get at the bowler, going across my stance, but leaving my left leg a little bit open".

If you start with a reverse, you quickly wake up from the dream: Gajewski

FIDE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SINGAPORE 2024

P.K. Ajith Kumar
SINGAPORE

After D. Gukesh lost his 12th game in the World chess championship to Ding Liren, he made peace with himself. He told his coach Grzegorz Gajewski, "I am feeling fine, I am ready to fight him and for the tie-breaks."

That was the moment Gajewski realised that he did not need to be worried about his ward. "He said all those things to me without hesitation," the Polish Grandmaster, who headed the 18-year-old's formidable support staff, tells *The Hindu*.

"He finally made his peace with the fact that his opponent is a World champion and he also wants to win."

He says he was not concerned after Gukesh's defeat in the opening game. "In his regard, I am very happy that he started with a loss," says the coach who has been part of the WestBridge Anand Chess Academy. "Because, if you start with a loss, you quickly wake up from the dream."

Among the elite: Gajewski believes Gukesh is one of the best calculators after Anand, and is also a little like a young Caruana. FIDE

Gajewski prepared Gukesh for the best version of Ding, not the one who had been going through poor form and who had gone on record about his mental health issues. "I told him that the man became the World champion, and it was not a coincidence," he says. "He might have a difficult period, but he will bring his very best for the match. And he will fight like crazy. That is exactly what happened."

About Gukesh rejecting virtual offers of draw, Gajewski says that was how he thought the match could be won. "That was the overall strategy, to exhaust the opponent," he explains.

Gajewski says calculation and deep knowledge are the major strengths of Gukesh. "He is one of the best calculators after Anand, who is the best ever in that department," he says. "And he is also a bit like a young Fabiano Caruana."

Nidhi stands tall as India retains women's Asia Cup

Continental champs: India overcame China in a shootout. @THEHOCKEYINDIA

HOCKEY

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MUSCAT

India's goalkeeper Nidhi stole the limelight in the penalty shootout, making three sensational saves to help India overcome three-time champion China 3-2 (1-1) and clinch its second consecutive women's junior Asia Cup hockey title here on Sunday.

Nidhi's heroics capped a stellar performance, having already stood tall during regulation time by thwarting multiple attempts from the Chinese forwards as the four quarters ended in a nerve-wracking 1-1 stalemate.

While skipper Jinzhuang Tan scored for China in the 30th minute, Kanika Siwach's strike early in the second half (41st minute) brought India back into the game in an intense battle for supremacy.

Sakshi Rana gave India a perfect start in the shootout by converting the first attempt, while Nidhi denied China's opener.

China fought back as Hao Guoting equalised, and after misses from Mumtaz Khan and Kanika, it was Ishika's top-corner strike that kept India level at 2-2.

Nidhi's heroics in the final two attempts, blocking shots from Li Jingyi and Zuo Dandan, set the stage for Sunelita Toppo, who sealed the win with a composed finish to seal a memorable victory for India.

The result: India 1 (Kanika Siwach 41) drew with China 1 (Jinzhuang Tan 30). (India won 3-2 via penalty shootout).

MCFC cashes in on a man advantage against MSC

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Mumbai City FC returned to winning ways with a 1-0 result over a 10-man Mohammedan Sporting SC in the ISL here on Sunday.

Vikram Pratap Singh found the net in the 48th minute as Mumbai City raised its tally to 17 points from 11 matches and moved to seventh.

Suffering its seventh loss in eight games, Mohammedan remains at bottom with five points from 11 matches.

Mumbai City found the break thanks to a faulty clearance by Mohammedan goalkeeper Bhaskar Roy that released Vikram Pratap and he made no mistake with his powerful shot.

The result: Mohammedan SC 0 lost to Mumbai City FC 1 (Vikram Pratap Singh 48).

INBRIEF

Sonam and Kamalini excel as India routs Pakistan

India, riding on 17-year-old spinner Sonam Yadav's four-wicket haul and an entertaining knock by G. Kamalini *(in pic)*, thrashed Pakistan by nine wickets in a Group A match of the U-19 women's Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

Left-arm spinner Sonam, with her best international bowling figures of four for six, helped India restrict Pakistan to just 67 for seven in 20 overs. The total was overhauled in 7.5 overs, with Kamalini playing a stroke-filled unbeaten knock of 44 off just 29 deliveries.

India will next play Nepal in its last Group A outing on Tuesday before the teams for the Super Four stage are decided.

The scores: Pakistan 67/7 in 20 overs (Sonam Yadav 4/6) lost to India 68/1 in 7.5 overs (G. Kamalini 44 n.o.).

Bowlers put New Zealand on the ascendancy

England's hopes of a series clean sweep all but evaporated on Sunday as it capitulated on day two of the third Test to trail New Zealand by 340 runs at Hamilton.

The home side skittled England for 143 before reaching 136 for three by stumps in the second innings.

The scores: New Zealand 347 in 97.1 overs (Santner 76, Latham 63; Potts 4/90, Atkinson 3/66) & 136/3 in 32 overs (Young 60, Williamson 50 batting) vs England 143 in 35.4 overs (Root 32; Henry 4/48, O'Rourke 3/33; Santner 3/7).

Thalaivas knocked out of the race; Yoddhas beat Mumba

Jaipur Pink Panthers produced an impressive all-round display to eliminate Tamil Thalaivas from the playoffs race with a 34-27 win in the Pro Kabaddi League here on Sunday.

Arjun Deshwal found ample support from Neeraj Narwal and Abhijeet Malik, while Ankush Rathee led the defensive charge. For the Tamil Thalaivas, Nitesh Kumar's High 5 went in vain.

Panthers skipper and star raider Arjun had good support from his supporting raiders as the two-time champions took an early lead.

In the day's other match, UP Yoddhas got past U Mumba 30-27 in a close contest.

Stars struggle as uncapped players strike gold

The 16-year-old Kamalini is bought by Mumbai Indians for ₹1.60 crore while Simran emerges the costliest buy (₹1.90 crore); the likes of Sneh, Poonam, Shubha, Mansi and Tejal fail to find bidders

WPL

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Indian national team players found the going tough while the uncapped ones struck gold in the Women's Premier League (WPL) mini auction at the ITC Gardenia here on Sunday.

Not one among Sneh Rana, Poonam Yadav, Shubha Satheesh, Mansi Joshi and Tejal Hasabnis found an enthusiastic bidder even as the likes of Simran Shaikh, G. Kamalini and Prema Rawat saw gold coins rain.

Highest bid

All-rounder Simran received the highest bid of ₹1.90 crore (base price ₹10 lakh) from Gujarat Giants despite going largely unnoticed in her stint with UP Warriorz in 2023 and being unsold last year.

"We were looking at two power-hitters and we got them both," said Michael Klinger, head coach of Giants which added West Indies all-rounder Deandra Dottin to the line-up for ₹1.70 crore. "We are not too worried about the price tag. Skills matter," he declared. Giants also secured Danielle Gibson and Prakashika Naik to shore up the bowling.

Teenager G. Kamalini was bought by Mumbai Indians for ₹1.60 crore. The 16-year-old from Tamil Nadu, who zoomed up from ₹10 lakh, was the second-highest scorer in the U-19 Women's T20 Trophy (311 runs at SR: 123.90) that Tamil Nadu won in October.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru, captained by the highest-paid player in WPL (Smriti Mandhana, ₹3.40 crore), welcomed Prema Rawat for ₹1.20 crore. The 23-year-old wrist-spinner, who attracted eyeballs during the inaugural Uttarakhand Premier League in August, will join forces with India tweakers Asha Sobhana and Shreyanka Patil.

"She has great control for a wrist-spinner," said RCB head coach Luke Williams. "Looking at how spinners performed last year, adding a spin bowler to our arsenal was ideal."

Interestingly, Delhi Capitals were involved in bidding wars for Simran, Kamalini and Prema. It eventually signed Nandini Kashyap – now part of the India set-up – for ₹10 lakh, a deal Capitals' director of cricket Saurav Ganguly felt was a steal. The 22-year-old was the third-highest scorer in the 2024 senior Women's T20 Trophy (247 runs at SR: 125.38).

"We needed one of Nandini, Kamalini or Simran," said the former India skipper. "But we didn't expect to get Nandini for that price. She has the best record and we probably got the best [of the three]," opined Ganguly, who also seemed chuffed at getting Scotland's Sarah Bryce (₹10 lakh).

Among notable overseas talents, there were no takers for England's Heather Knight, Maia Bouchier and Lauren Bell, Australia's Darcie Brown and Lauren Cheatle, and South Africa's Lizelle Lee. But Aussie leg-spinner Alana King and South Africa all-rounder Nadine de Klerk found sanctuaries in UP and Mumbai.

Mini auction's Major gainers

Simran, Dottin, Kamalini and Prema joined the crore club when the players went under the hammer during the WPL auction in Bengaluru on Sunday

DELHI CAPITALS

Meg Lanning, Alice Capsey, Annabel Sutherland, Arundhati Reddy, Jemimah Rodrigues, Jess Jonassen, Marizanne Kapp, Minnu Mani, Radha Yadav, Shafali Verma, Shikha Pandey, Sneha Deepthi, Taniya Bhatia, Titas Sadhu

2025 auction picks: N. Charani (55 lakh), Nandini Kashyap (10), Niki Prasad (10), Sarah Bryce (10)

GUJARAT GIANTS

Beth Mooney, Ashleigh Gardner, Bharti Fulmali, D. Hemalatha, Harleen Deol, Kashvee Gautam, Laura Wolvaardt, Mannat Kashyap, Meghna Singh, Phoebe Litchfield, Priya Mishra, Sayali Satghare, Shabnam Shakil, Tanuja Kanwar

2025 auction picks: Simran Shaikh (1.90 crore), Deandra Dottin (1.70), Danielle Gibson (30 lakh), Prakashika Naik (10)

MUMBAI INDIANS

Harmanpreet Kaur, Amandeep Kaur, Amanjot Kaur, Amelia Kerr, Chloe Tryon, Hayley Matthews, Jintimani Kalita, Keerthana Balakrishnan, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Pooja Vastrakar, Saika Ishaque, S. Sajana, Shabnim Ismail, Yastika Bhatia

2025 auction picks: G. Kamalini (1.60 crore), Nadine de Klerk (30 lakh), Akshita Maheshwari (20), Sanskriti Gupta (10)

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU

Smriti Mandhana, Asha Sobhana, Danni Wyatt, Ekta Bisht, Ellyse Perry, Georgia Wareham, Kanika Ahuja, Kate Cross, Renuka Singh, Richa Ghosh, Shreyanka Patil, S. Meghana, Sophie Devine, Sophie Molineux

2025 auction picks: Prema Rawat (1.20 crore), Jagravi Pawar (10 lakh), V.J. Joshitha (10), Raghvi Bist (10)

UP WARRIORZ

Alyssa Healy, Anjali Sarvani, Chamari Athapaththu, Deepti Sharma, Gouher Sultana, Grace Harris, Kiran Navgire, Poonam Khemnar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Saima Thakor, Shweta Sehrawat, Sophie Ecclestone, Tahlia McGrath, Uma Chetry, Vrinda Dinesh

2025 auction picks: Alana King (30 lakh), Arushi Goel (10), Kranti Goud (10)

Jemimah, Smriti on song as India crushes WI in T20I opener

In smashing form: Jemimah scored a 35-ball 73 with nine fours and two sixes. EMMANUAL YOGINI

WI IN INDIA

Shayan Acharya
NAVI MUMBAI

The DY Patil Stadium has been a favourite venue for Smriti Mandhana as she has played some memorable knocks here. And when international cricket returned on Sunday, the left-hander was busy scoring runs again.

Smriti (54, 33b, 7x4, 2x6) was involved in a pivotal second-wicket partnership of 81 off 44 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues (73, 35b, 9x4, 2x6), paving the way for India's 49-run win against the West Indies in the first women's T20I.

Having scored four centuries in a calendar year in the ODIs, Smriti scored her sixth half-century of the season in T20Is as the Women in Blue amassed 195 for four – their third-highest total in the format – before restricting the visiting team to 146 for seven.

Sloppy fielding, dropped catches and erratic bowling let the West Indies down after it opted to bowl first, and the Indian batters made the most of the opportunity.

While opener Uma Chetry enjoyed a reprieve and got some quick runs before falling to Karishma Ramharack, there was no stopping Smriti and Jemimah.

As nearly 30,000 fans cheered, Smriti anchored the innings, allowing Jemimah to score at will. The latter hammered a few boundaries on the leg-side, leaving the West Indies bowlers searching for answers.

By the time Ramharack dismissed Smriti, India was in the driver's seat and Richa Ghosh's 14-ball 20-run cameo meant there was no slip-up for the home team.

Smriti. EMMANUAL YOGINI

With dew settling in, it was a tricky situation to be in for the Indian bowlers. However, the young fast bowler Titas Sadhu (3 for 37) got the early breakthrough by dismissing the captain Hayley Matthews on the second ball of her opening over. Shermaine Campbelle, too, fell to Deepti Sharma early on. But then, there was a glimmer of hope for West Indies with Deandra Dottin and Qiana Joseph forging a 44-run stand for the third wicket. After a reprieve, Dottin came up with a quickfire 52 off 28 balls while Joseph was left heartbroken after falling one short of a half-century.

Once they departed, West Indies' hopes were dashed.

The scores:
India 195/4 in 20 overs (Smriti 54, Jemimah 73, Ramharack 2/18) bt West Indies 146/7 in 20 overs (Dottin 52, Joseph 49; Titas 3/37, Deepti 2/21, Radha 2/28); **Toss:** West Indies.

Extremely happy to be picked by Mumbai Indians, says Kamalini

Tarun Shastry
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu all-rounder G. Kamalini, who was signed by Mumbai Indians for ₹1.60 crore in the WPL mini auction in Bengaluru on Sunday, said she didn't expect to go for such a hefty amount.

Speaking to *The Hindu* from Kuala Lumpur, an excited Kamalini said, "I am extremely happy to be picked by the Mumbai Indians. I had gone for trials thrice. I didn't expect to be picked for such a huge amount."

"When I went to the Mumbai Indians trials, I found the ambience and the atmosphere to be very positive and encouraging and made me want to be a part of the team," she added. The 16-year-old sparked a fierce bidding battle between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals Women, with the former outbidding the latter, starting at a base price of ₹10 lakh.

Kamalini. FILE PHOTO

After her recent performances in the domestic tournaments, Kamalini emerged as one of the most in-demand players in the auction pool.

The southpaw, who has the ability to hit huge sixes, was the second-highest run-getter (311, eight matches) in the under-19 T20 tournament which Tamil Nadu won.

Kamalini, a wicketkeeper-batter who can also bowl leg-spin, has had rigorous training at the Super Kings Academy in Chennai.

Kamalini expressed her gratitude to legendary India cricketer Jhulan Goswami, mentor of the Mumbai Indians Women and former India wicketkeeper Kiran More, the team's manager.

"I am really thankful to my parents and my elder brother for their tremendous support in my cricketing journey."

Earlier on Sunday, Kamalini's unbeaten 29-ball 44 (4x4, 3x6) helped India canter home against Pakistan in the U-19 Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur.

Anticipated interest

MI Head Coach Charlotte Edwards highlighted her belief in the youngster's talent for the forthcoming WPL.

"It was one name that kept coming up in all of the meetings in the last two or three months. We needed a backup for Yastika (Bhatia) and a left-handed option in the middle-order.

"She is young, so we anticipated interest. So we needed to have that purse handy. We hope she will be with us for a long time, and we can't wait to have her in our set-up."

United pulls off a stunning heist away at Manchester City

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Manchester United struck twice in the dying minutes to earn a dramatic 2-1 win at Manchester City on Sunday, deepening the pain of City boss Pep Guardiola.

Josko Gvardiol's first-half goal appeared to have won the game for the Premier League champion but Bruno Fernandes levelled from the penalty spot in the 88th minute and the impressive Amad Diallo poked home the winner two minutes later.

Earlier Crystal Palace winger Ismaila Sarr scored a brace as his side beat Brighton 3-1 at the Amex Stadium, handing the Seagulls their first home defeat in the Premier League this season.

Nuno Espirito Santo saluted Nottingham Forest's "heart" and "desire" after it climbed to fourth place in the Premier League with a stirring fightback to beat Aston Villa 2-1 on Saturday.

Delirious scenes: Amad Diallo is mobbed by teammates after poking in United's winner. GETTY IMAGES

The results: Premier League: Brighton 1 (Guehi 87-og) lost to Crystal Palace 3 (Chalobah 27, Sarr 33, 82); Manchester City 1 (Gvardiol 36) lost to Manchester United 2 (Fernandes 88-pen, Diallo 90)

Serie A: Bologna 1 (Odgaard 59) bt Fiorentina 0; Parma 2 (Sohm 19, 90) lost to Verona 3 (Coppola 5, Sarr 67, Mosquera 75).

Bundesliga: Borussia Dortmund 1 (Reyna 46) drew with Hoffenheim 1 (Bruun Larsen 90+1); Heidenheim 1 (Wanner 41) lost to Stuttgart 3 (Mittelstaedt 20, Millot 45+2, Woltemade 85-pen).

On Saturday: Premier League: Nottingham Forest 2 (Milenkovic 87, Elanga 90+3) bt Aston Villa 1 (Duran 63).

LaLiga: Espanyol 0 drew with Osasuna 0; Mallorca 2 (Larin 20, 51) bt Girona 1 (van de Beek 7); Sevilla 1 (Bueno 64) bt Celta Vigo 0; Rayo Vallecano 3 (Lopez 4, Mumin 36, Palazon 64) drew with Real Madrid 3 (Valverde 39, Bellingham 45, Rordrygo 56).

Serie A: Juventus 2 (Gatti 19, Vlahovic 90+5-pen) drew with Venezia 2 (Ellertsson 61, Idzes 83); Udinese 1 (Thauvin 22) lost to Napoli 3 (Lukaku 50, Giannetti 76-og, Anguissa 81).

Deepika, Dhiraj and Ankita top the list at Nationals

The most notable absentee will be the decorated compound archer Jyothi Surekha due to differences between her and the State unit

All set: Dhiraj and Ankita will look to end the year on a high after the near miss in the Paris Games. PTI

ARCHERY

Y.B. Sarangi
JAMSHEDPUR

Ahead of a busy 2025 calendar, top archers of the country, including Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat, B. Dhiraj, Abhishek Verma and Aditi Swami, will test themselves in the year-ending National archery championships starting at the Gopal Maidan, located in the heart of the city, here on Monday.

The most notable absentee will be the decorated compound archer V. Jyothi Surekha due to differences between the athlete and her State unit, the Andhra Pradesh Archery Association.

After yet another disappointing outing in the Olympics, Deepika redeemed some pride by securing a silver at the World Cup Finals in Tlaxcala, Mexico, in October and would be keen to close the year on a good note.

For Dhiraj, who along with Ankita experienced a so-near-yet-so-far moment to finish fourth in the mixed team event of the Paris Olympics, the National event marks the beginning of his preparations for the next Olympics.

"I take the positives out of our performance in Paris. For me, the next Olympics is not far away. I am back to the basics.

"This is an important tournament in my preparation phase as I am focusing on improving the core areas of my game," said Dhiraj.

The first target for the archers, some of whom recently competed in indoor events abroad, will be to get good rankings in order to be eligible to participate in the National Games in Uttarakhand next month.

Then follows a calendar studded with several international events, including the World Championships, World Games, Asian championships and World Cups.

Magnum for the Sweet Girl Plate

RACING

HYDERABAD: The four-year-old gelding Magnum, who ran second to Dyf in his last start in the Golconda St. Leger, should make amends in the Sweet Girl Plate, the chief event of Monday's (Dec. 16) races.

1 STEP ASIDE PLATE (DIV. I) (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 2-y-o only (Cat. II), 12.45 p.m.: 1. Arizona Sun (7) Akshay K 56, 2. Quick Bay Fox (2) Mukesh 56, 3. Yuvraj (8) Kuldeep Sr. 4. Emerald Touch (1) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 5. Gachchhatu (3) P. Sai K 54.5, 6. Miss Smiley Angel (5) Mohit 54.5, 7. Pacific Heights (6) Vivek G 54.5 and 8. Timeless Elegance (4) Md. Ismail 54.5.
1. QUICK BAY FOX, 2. ARIZONA SUN, 3. PACIFIC HEIGHTS

2 HUSSAIN SAGAR CUP (DIV. II) (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1.15: 1. Caraxes (10) G. Naresh 60, 2. Quality Warrior (11) Afroz K 59.5, 3. Emperors Charm (12) A. Prakash 58, 4. London Bell (9) R.S. Jodha 58, 5. Black Dust (6) P. Sai K 57, 6. Bellingham (5) B.R. Kumar 56, 7. Grey Sky (8) Nakhat 54, 8. N R I Star (4) Santosh Raj 51.5, 9. Rani Ruckus (3) B. Nikhil 51.5, 10. Sadiya (1) Surya Prakash 51.5, 11. Hoping King (7) Kuldeep Jr. 51 and 12. Hawk King (2) Ajay K 50.5.
1. EMPERORS CHARM, 2. LONDON BELL, 3. QUALITY WARRIOR

3 STEP ASIDE PLATE (DIV. II) (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 2-y-o only, 1.45: 1. Cypress (3) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 2. Royal Warrior (5) G. Naresh 56, 3. Beverley (8) Vivek G 54.5, 4. Divine Faith (7) A. Prakash 54.5, 5. Dubai Touch (1) R.S. Bhati 54.5, 6. Mystical Dawn (2) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 7. Pride Aside (6) Gaurav 54.5 and 8. Turiya (4) Abhay Singh 54.5.
1. TURIYA, 2. DIVINE FAITH, 3. PRIDE ASIDE

4 NEXT MOVE PLATE (DIV. I) (1,100m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.15: 1. Inderdhanush (4) Shivansh 61.5, 2. Starwalt (5) Mohit 59.5, 3. American Flame (3) H.M. Akshay 57.5, 4. Star Medal (7) Nakhat 57, 5. N R I Dheera (1) Kuldeep Sr. 55.5, 6. Jet Falcon (8) Surya Prakash 54, 7. Muaser (6) P. Ajeeth K 54 and 8. Politics (2) Md. Ismail 53.
1. AMERICAN FLAME, 2. MUASER, 3. N R I DHEERA

5 ZOOM ZOOM PLATE (1,200m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 2.45: 1. Blissfil (8) R.S. Jodha 61.5, 2. Torchbearer (4) Ashad Asbar 58, 3. Star Forever (1) P. Sai K 57, 4. Calistoga (10) Vivek G 55.5, 5. Lady Danger (11) Surya Prakash 55, 6. Ariette (9) Akshay K 54.5, 7. First Class (3) Mukesh 54.5, 8. Exclusive Black (7) Md. Ismail 54, 9. High Heels (2) Gaurav 54, 10. Hurricane Wave (5) Afroz K 53 and 11. Normui (6) B. Nikhil 50.
1. ARIETTE, 2. CALISTOGA, 3. TORCHBEARER

6 SWEET GIRL PLATE (2,000m) Terms, 3-y-o and upward, rated 50 and above (Cat. II), 3.15: 1. Magnum (3) Akshay K 62, 2. Armstrong (6) M. Mark 60, 3. N R I Sport (5) Santosh Raj 60, 4. Barbet (2) Mukesh 58.5, 5. Nightmare (7) B.R. Kumar 58.5, 6. Get Lucky (1) P. Sai K 57.5 and 7. Alpine Girl (4) R.S. Bhati 53.5.
1. MAGNUM, 2. BARBET, 3. N R I SPORT

7 HUSSAIN SAGAR CUP (DIV. I) (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.45: 1. Knotty Senorita (10) Gaurav 60.5, 2. Hoping Star (3) Mohit 59, 3. Vital Sign (4) B.R. Kumar 59, 4. Grand Duke (9) R.S. Jodha 57.5, 5. In Proposito (11) A. Prakash 57.5, 6. Coming Home (8) B. Nikhil 56.5, 7. Sargent (2) H.M. Akshay 55, 8. Gun For Gold (12) Surya Prakash 53.5, 9. Splendour On Grass (6) Ajay K 52, 10. Reining Queen (13) P. Ajeeth K 51, 11. Balahaka (5) G. Naresh 50.5, 12. First Lady (1) Santosh Raj 50.5 and 13. Oskars Officer (7) Abhay Singh 50.5.
1. VITAL SIGN, 2. KNOTTY SENORITA, 3. HOPING STAR

8 WANAPARTHY CUP (1,400m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.15: 1. True Icon (5) P. Ajeeth K 60, 2. City Of Blessing (6) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 3. Divine Destiny (9) Surya Prakash 56, 4. Morior Invictus (2) R.S. Bhati 55, 5. Mark My Day (1) Nakhat 54.5, 6. N R I Ultrapower (11) Abhay Singh 54.5, 7. Briar Ridge (4) Santosh Raj 54, 8. Burgundy Black (8) Mukesh 53.5, 9. Miss Marvellous (3) Afroz K 53, 10. Park Lane (12) Md. Ismail 53, 11. Sopranos (10) P. Sai K 52.5, 12. Winning Attitude (7) Vivek G 52 and 13. Sun Dancer (13) Rafique Sk. 51.
1. BRIAR RIDGE, 2. N R I ULTRAPOWER, 3. WINNING ATTITUDE

9 NEXT MOVE PLATE (DIV. II) (1,100m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.45: 1. Sucker Punch (2) P. Ajeeth K 61, 2. Cosmico (8) B. Nikhil 58.5, 3. N R I Skypower (6) Santosh Raj 57, 4. D Battle (1) Kuldeep Jr. 56, 5. Dali's Champion (7) Kuldeep Sr. 55, 6. Tupac (3) Mohit 53.5, 7. Exponent (4) Nakhat 53 and 8. Blue Panteress (5) Abhay Singh 52.5.
1. DALI'S CHAMPION, 2. COSMICO, 3. N R I SKYPOWER
Day's Best: **MAGNUM**
Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 6, 7, 8 & 9.
Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 4, 5 & 6, (iii) 7, 8 & 9.
Tanala: All races.

Winning start: Kerala players celebrate after scoring against Goa. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kerala fends off a strong challenge from Goa

SANTOSH TROPHY

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

Kerala rallied to score a 4-3 win against Goa while Meghalaya fought from two goals down to draw with Tamil Nadu in the Santosh Trophy National football championship at the Deccan Arena here on Sunday.

Nigel Fernandes put last year's runner-up Goa in the lead early on in the second minute, as he turned his marker and slotted it low and hard. However, Muhammed Riyas, Muhammed Ajsal and Naseeb Rahman all scored in the first half, to put the seven-time champion Kerala in a commanding position.

▼ Meghalaya fights from two goals down to draw with Tamil Nadu

Mazy run

Christy Davis (69) produced a mazy run from just outside the box, as he beat two defenders, and then sidestepped the onrushing Goa custodian Antonio Da Silva, to score in an empty net. Goa did mount a late surge, as substitute Shubert Joanus Pereira (78, 86) scored two, but Kerala maintained lead to take home the points.

Meghalaya midfielder Damanbhalang Chyne produced a brilliant strike in the 50th minute to find the top corner from outside the box before he slotted home a 69th minute penalty to draw his side level after goals by Pandiyan Sinivasan and Alexander Romario Jesuraj had put Tamil Nadu ahead.

The results: Kerala 4 (Muhammed Riyas , Muhammad Ajsal, Naseeb Rahman, Christy Davis) bt Goa 3 (Nigel Fernandes, Shubert Joanus Pereira 2).

Tamil Nadu 2 (Pandiyan Sinivasan, Alexander Romario Jesuraj) drew with Meghalaya 2 (Damanbhalang Chyne 2).

Delhi 2 (Jaideep Singh, Rohmingthanga) bt Odisha 0.

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Harini Nagendra

In conversation with Jayapriya Vasudevan

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In conversation with Ina Puri

A Life in Cinema
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Amol Palekar

In conversation with Balaji Vittal

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INBRIEF

Gill wins K1000; Karna Kadur clinches INRC crown

Gaurav Gill and co-driver Aniruddha Rangnekar won the iconic K1000 rally, but it was Arka Motorsports' Karna Kadur (co-driver Musa Sherif), *in pic*, who provisionally clinched the 2024 Indian National Rally Championship in the sixth and final round of the Blueband FMSCI INRC at Tumakuru, Karnataka, on Sunday. Jason Saldanha and Thimmu Uddapanda came second ahead of Aroor Arjun Rao and Satish Rajagopal, who slid to third after a flat tyre in the last stage.

India gets 'most improved team' award at World squash

The India men's and women's squads received the 'most improved Team' at awards ceremony of the WSF-World team squash championships in Hong Kong on Sunday. The men had finished fifth while the women came seventh.

Namdhari humbles title contender Real Kashmir

Real Kashmir FC lost to Namdhari FC 1-0 in the I-League in Ludhiana on Sunday. Brazilian Cledson Dasilva Degol scored in the 15th minute.

LIVE TELECAST

PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

Serie A: gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)

New Zealand vs England: 3rd Test, day 4, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Australia vs India: 3rd Test, day 4, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5.20 a.m. (Tuesday)

Shedge's blistering cameo finishes the job for Mumbai

Suryakumar, Rahane weigh in with crucial contributions as the domestic giant wins the national T20 tournament for a second time; Patidar plays the lone hand for Madhya Pradesh with 40-ball 81

MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Mumbai defeated a fighting Madhya Pradesh by five wickets to emerge the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy champion here on Sunday. Mumbai claimed a second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, after its maiden win in 2022-23.

The tournament final, witnessed by a sizeable and enthusiastic crowd, saw Mumbai chase down a challenging 175-run target. Opener and form batter Ajinkya Rahane (37, 30b, 4x4) laid the platform for Suryakumar Yadav to show his might. There were scoops and swivel pulls aplenty as Suryakumar (48, 35b, 4x4, 3x6) got into the groove.

Mumbai was in a spot of bother when Suryakumar fell against the run of play. With Mumbai on 129 for five, Madhya Pradesh sniffed a chance. But Suryansh Shedge (36 n.o., 15b, 3x4, 3x6) and Atharva Ankolekar (16 n.o., 6b, 2x6) proved up to the task with a blistering unbeaten 19-ball 51 sixth-wicket stand.

The young Shedge added to his growing reputation as an ace finisher with another fearless knock.

The first half of the match was dominated by Madhya Pradesh captain Rajat Patidar, who made a stunning unbeaten 40-ball 81. Patidar single-handedly got MP to a competitive score, even as the other batters struggled with the spongy bounce.

A couple of sixes – a checked front-foot drive and a dancing hook – received thunderous applause. The 31-year-old was let down by his teammates, who could not give him adequate support.

The scores:

Madhya Pradesh 174/8 in 20 overs (Rajat Patidar 81 n.o.) lost to Mumbai 180/5 in 17.5 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 48, Suryansh Shedge 36 n.o., Ajinkya Rahane 37).

Toss: Mumbai; **PoM:** Suryansh Shedge; **PoS:** Ajinkya Rahane.

Unstoppable: A powerful Mumbai stormed to victory. K. MURALI KUMAR

Vital contributions: Shedge's aggressive knock guided Mumbai home while player of the series Rahane played a key role. K. MURALI KUMAR

World Cup kho kho to feature 41 teams

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

The inaugural World Cup kho kho is scheduled to feature 41 teams, including 20 women's teams, from around the world.

England, Germany, Holland, Poland, Kenya, South Africa, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Peru, Australia and host India are expected to field both men and women teams in the league cum knock-out competition to be played at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium and the Noida Indoor Stadium from January 13 to 19.

Ghana, USA, Argentina and Brazil will field only men's teams. Uganda, Indonesia and New Zealand will be fielding only the women's teams. "We will be hosting 615 players and 125 support staff, apart from technical officials," said the president of the Kho Kho Federation of India, Sudhanshu Mittal.

The teams have confirmed their travel plans and are set to arrive on January 10 and 11.

The host will take care of the accommodation, food and transport requirements of teams and officials. Volunteers are also being trained to take care of various logistics.

Rithvik claims men's crown; Cai wins women's title

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
CUTTACK

India's Rithvik Sanjeevi Satish Kumar claimed his maiden BWF Super 100 title, defeating compatriot Tharun Mannepalli 21-18, 21-16 in the men's final of the Odisha Masters on Sunday.

In the women's singles final, 15-year-old Tanvi Sharma was defeated 14-21, 16-21 by Chinese qualifier Cai Yan Yan in 35 minutes.

Other results: Finals: Doubles: Men: Huang Di & Liu Yang (Chn) bt Kakeru Kumagai & Hiroki Nishi (Jpn) 21-13, 19-21, 27-25; **Women:** Nanako Hara & Riko Kiyose (Jpn) bt Keng Shu Liang & Wang Ting Ge (Chn) 21-11, 21-19. **Mixed doubles:** Gao Jia Xuan & Tang Riu Zhi (Chn) bt Hee Yong Kai Terry & Jin Yu Jia (Sgp)15-21, 21-15, 21-15.

Iniesta bids farewell to a glittering career

Agence France Presse
TOKYO

Retiring Spanish football legend Andres Iniesta bid farewell to his playing career on Sunday in an exhibition match between Barcelona and Real Madrid greats here.

The 40-year-old won two European Championships and the 2010 World Cup.

Iniesta gave a crowd of more than 45,000 fans one last glimpse of the skills that also saw him win nine La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues during his 16 years with Barcelona.

Bhubaneswar to host World Athletics Continental Tour event

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India will host its maiden World Athletics (WA) Continental Tour event – a bronze-level global meet – in Bhubaneswar on August 10 next year, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said on Sunday while releasing the competition calendar for 2025.

The Tour forms the second tier of international one-day meetings after the Diamond League.

The 2025 calendar:
Natl. cross country: January 12, 2025; **Natl. race walking:** April 19, Chandigarh; **Senior Natl. Federation Cup:** April 21-24, Panchkula (qualification event for Asian Championships from May 27-31 in Korea).

Natl. inter-State (senior): August 20-24, Chennai; **Natl. Open:** Sept. 27-30, Pune or Bengaluru.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Triumphant: The victorious Garuda HC squad. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bengal gets the better of Karnataka

Karnataka lost to Bengal by seven wickets in a Group-E encounter of the Senior Women's One Day Trophy in Lahli, Haryana, on Saturday.

It was Karnataka's first loss in five matches and the side is tied with topper Bengal on 16 points.

The scores: Karnataka 138 in 43.3 overs (Shubha Satheesh 20, Prathyoosha Kumar 39) lost to Bengal 139/3 in 34.5 overs (Dhara Gujjar 62 n.o., T. Sarkar 47).

Karnataka rides on three tons to take first innings lead

Centuries from Arya J. Gowda (104), Dhruv Krishnan (122) and Anvay Dravid (100 n.o.) helped Karnataka secure the first-innings lead (three points) in a drawn Vijay Merchant (U-16) Trophy match recently.

The scores: Jharkhand 387 in 128.4 overs (Tauhid 98, Tanmay 60, Swarit Singh 31, Saket Kumar Singh 58, Manmeet Sagar 72, J. Sukruth 4/60) drew with Karnataka 441/4 in 123.3 overs (Arya J. Gowda 104, Dhruv Krishnan 122, Syaamantak Anirudh 76, Anvay Dravid 100 n.o., J. Sukruth 33).

Pooja survives a scare from Vedhalakshmi

The UTT National-ranking table tennis championships (seniors) got underway at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru with the qualifying rounds on Sunday. Karnataka's Vedhalakshmi Devi gave seasoned PSPB paddler Pooja Sahasrabudhe a major scare before the latter triumphed 11-6, 11-4, 10-12, 4-11, 13-11.

Similarly, Preksha Tilawat showcased remarkable grit against Haryana's Sneha Bhowmick and won 11-9, 6-11, 5-11, 11-7, 12-10.

In men's singles, Harmeet Desai and Ankur Bhattacharjee have secured the top-two seeding positions, while among women Sutirtha Mukherjee and Swastika Ghosh have locked the first two spots.

Garuda wins KSHA C-division hockey league

Garuda HC defeated Bangalore Friends HC 2-1 on the final day to bag top position in the KSHA C-division hockey league here on Saturday.

The result: Garuda HC 2 (Suresh Banu 4, D. Sanjai 19) bt Bangalore Friends HC 1 (Hasi Shamal 32).

Maithya and Aasa take the honours

Kenya's Michael Maithya, 27, won the Bangalore Midnight Marathon men's elite race in 2:24:01s. India's Gyan Babu came second in 2:29:57s while Abhishek Soni followed home in third place by clocking 2:30:14s.

In the open category for women, 37-year-old T.P. Aasa from Kerala took gold with a timing of 3:26:43s.

Bijoya Barman from Assam finished second (3:39:25s) while Sushma Rana was third (4:47:31s).

Indian Golf Union factions hold separate elections

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

The two factions of the Indian Golf Union (IGU) led by Brijinder Singh and Harish Shetty, went through the process of having the elections in the purported annual general meetings in different parts of the capital on Sunday.

The two elections in which the candidates got elected unopposed to the governing council, were conducted by Returning Officers, Justice (Retd.) Rameshwar Singh Malik and Justice (Retd.) O.P. Garg.

The Delhi High Court had allowed the conduct of the elections, stating in its order on December 10, by Justice Prateek Jalan, "the rights of the petitioner, or any other party, to challenge the election, inter-alia, on the ground that it was wrongly excluded from the electoral college, will remain reserved. All rights and contentions of the parties in this regard are left open for adjudication in accordance with law at appropriate stage."

One of the factions claimed a majority of 21 out of the 31 members. The government observer was present in one election, and the representative of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) in the other.

The IGU has been in a lot of turmoil in recent weeks, even though the game itself has been flourishing in the country and reaching new heights, both in terms of the performance of players and the conduct of the big events.

As the court order had observed while disposing of the writ petition, along with the pending applications, the concerned parties would be free "to take appropriate legal remedy after the result of the election is declared."

Kissa and Kebede take the honours; Gulveer runs to new course record

WORLD 25K

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Ethiopia's champion marathoner Sutume Kebede came up with an impressive performance to retain the women's crown in the ninth edition of Tata Steel World 25K road race here on Sunday.

Ugandan Stephen Kissa outran the defending champion, Daniel Ebenyo of Kenya, to lift the title in the men's category.

Impressive

The Indian elite runners also came up with impressive performances, with Gulveer Singh setting a new course record in the men's section and Sanjeevani Jadhav claiming the title in the women's category, in the World Athletics Gold Label event.

Gulveer Singh lit up the day for the Indians as he sprinted away from his challengers in the final stage to register the best timing of the course by clocking 1:14:10. Sawan Barwal clocked a close 1:14:11 to cross the finish line fractionally behind.

Sanjeevani Jadhav, returning to the race after a gap of a year, improved her best by over five minutes to win in 1:29:08s.

On the podium: Gulveer was the best Indian while Sawan and Gaurav finished second and third. ANI

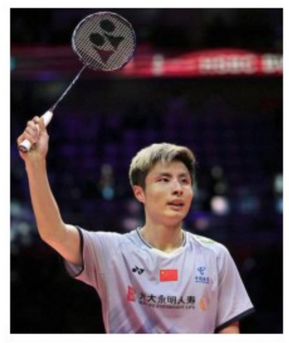
The results: Overall International: Men: 1. Stephen Kissa (Uganda) 1:12:33s, 2. Daniel Ebenyo (Kenya) 1:12:37, 3. Anthony Kipchirchir (Kenya) 1:12:55.

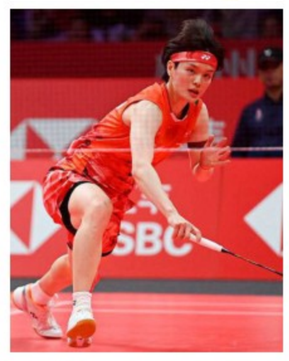
Women: 1. Sutume Kebede (Ethiopia) 1:19:17, 2. Viola Chepngeno (Kenya) 1:19:44, 3. Desi Jisa (Bahrain) 1:21:29.

Indians: Men: 1. Gulveer Singh 1:14:10 (NCR), 2. Sawan Barwal 1:14:11, 3. Gaurav Mathur 1:16:59.

Women: 1. Sanjeevani Jadhav 1:29:08, 2. Lili Das 1:30:58, 3. Kavita Yadav 1:32:19.

Shi clinches his second World Tour Finals title





Victorious: Shi, above, and Wang. AFP

BADMINTON

Agence France-Presse
HANGZHOU

China's Shi Yuqi blew away Denmark's Anders Antonsen 21-18, 21-14 to win the men's singles crown at the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals on Sunday as the host swept three titles. Yuqi won the prestigious title for a second time in his career, to go with his triumph in 2018.

In an all-Chinese women's final, Wang Zhiyi fought back to defeat Han Yue 19-21, 21-19, 21-11 in 74 minutes.

There was home glory too for the mixed doubles pair Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong as they beat Malaysia's Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei in three games to retain their title. It was a triumphant farewell to badminton for the 27-year-old Olympic gold medallist Zheng.

South Korea's Baek Hana and Lee So-hee and Denmark's Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen prevailed in the women's and men's doubles respectively.